

**If
even
one person goes hungry...**



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**If
even
one person goes hungry...**

**If even one person goes hungry...
We will destroy that world ...!**

*Subramania Bharati
Poet and freedom fighter*

**A SOURCE BOOK FOR ACTIVISTS
WORKING AGAINST HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION**

for CMC lib
JW
21/1/03

If Even One Person Goes Hungry...

A source book for activists working against hunger and malnutrition

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This book has four sections:

1. Understanding Hunger and Malnutrition:

An introduction to the problem, its dimensions and its determinants and its popular perception or non-perception.

2. Food Security:

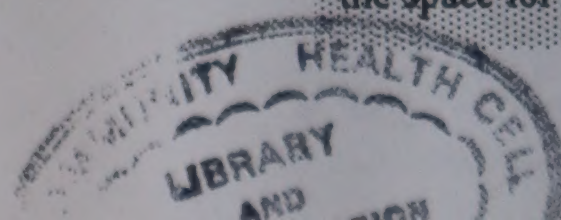
Exploring the nexus between hunger and agricultural policies at the international, national and local level.

3. State Action against hunger:

A discussion of what state action on hunger has been and ought to be.

4. Civil Society and People's Action on hunger:

Looking at what various institutions of civil society can do and how the space for such intervention may be enlarged by people's action.



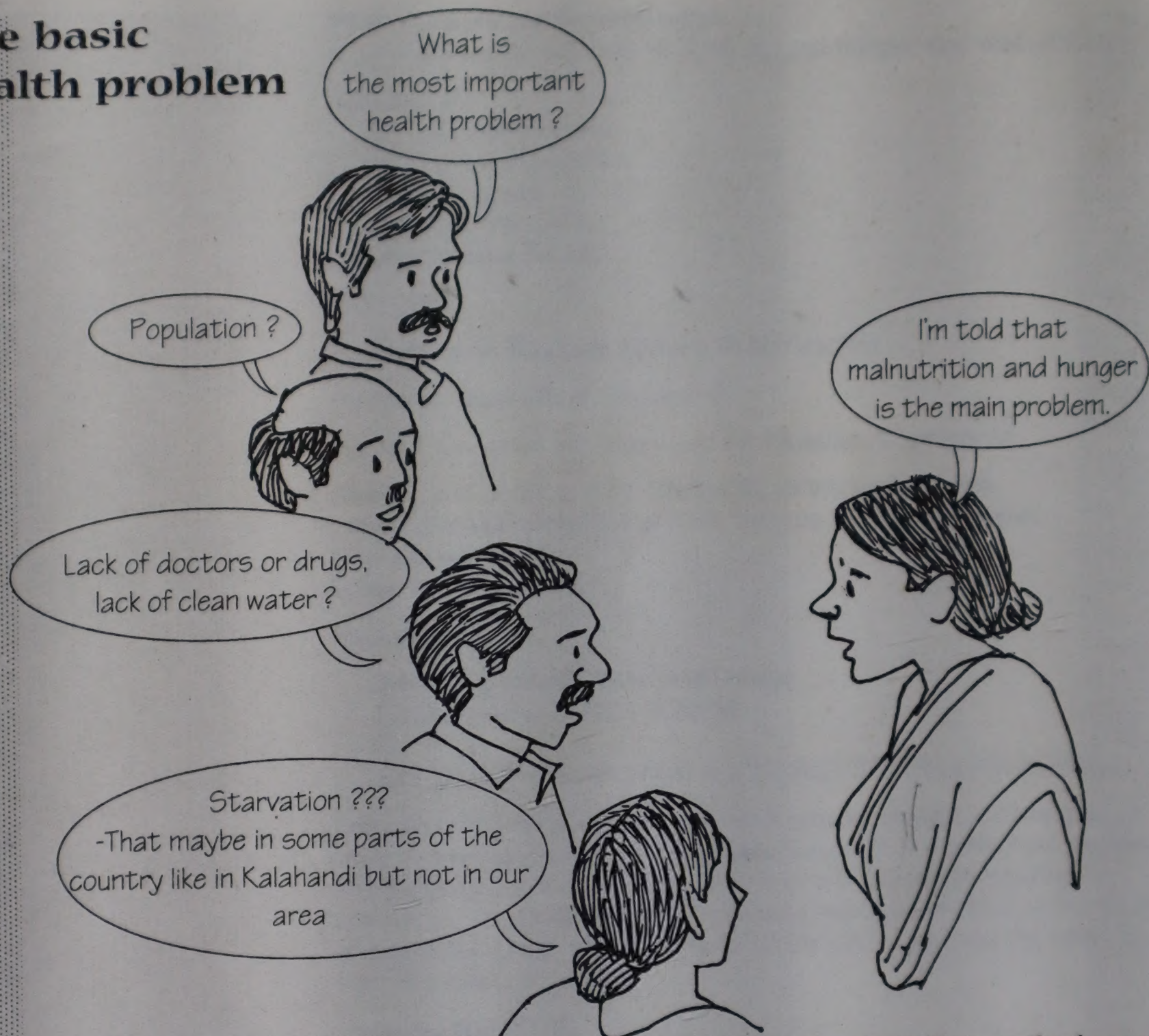


The term malnutrition means both overnutrition and undernutrition. We use it in this book only as undernutrition.

Understanding Hunger and Malnutrition:



The basic health problem



The failure to perceive hunger and malnutrition as the largest health and human rights issue in our society is one of the biggest problems of our society. Hence this book..



The extent of undernutrition

When we say that someone is below the poverty line we mean that they earn less than what is needed to pay for their basic minimum needs of which food is the most important. In India about 30 to 40 crore people live below the poverty line. They do not have enough money to buy food. The starvation in Kalahandi is only the extreme 'breaking news' form of this everyday phenomenon..

Even 26% is bad enough. But what does this really mean? Does it mean that the rest have enough to eat?

The poverty situation:

1.	NSS round 32	78	rural 50.6%	urban 40.5%
2.	NSS round 43	88	rural 39.6%	urban 35.65%
3.	NSS round 53	97	rural 45.3%	urban 30.0%

NSS 55th round puts it at 26%- which most experts would tell you is a serious, perhaps deliberate underestimation.

Not Really !

When we read data like this, we should also understand how this data was arrived at. There are many ways of measuring the number of poor people. This number will change depending on how you count.

Some people count the number of families below a particular income. The problem with that is often the poorest have no fixed 'income'. Their incomes vary daily and seasonally.

Others use Expenditure as a measure. Here again it is difficult to find out how much they have spent.

Yet another way is to measure the amount of calories consumed by a family."

Perceptions of poverty and hunger

But even though these poverty figures are accepted in theory, in each specific instance it is contested. Not surprising then that though the extent of poverty is accepted, many still do not perceive its relationship with hunger.

"Great News!
Our survey says that there is not a single family below the poverty line in Delhi's Yamuna Pushta slum. Things are improving - the government is doing its job.

But how can that be? Yamuna Pushta is the largest slum in Delhi. I just went to see it - I could see many poor families and lots of malnourished children!



What! You think the Govt. is lying? How dare you doubt our statistics! They are not really poor. They only look like that because they are unhygienic, dirty and waste money on drinking. Many are illegal encroachers - and not really part of the slum.



BMI - The measure of malnutrition

BMI or Body Mass Index is the weight in kg. divided by height in meters squared. It is used to measure adult malnutrition. "BMI below 18.5" is undernourished and over 30 is obese. By this criteria too the studies show that the number of malnourished are indeed very high.

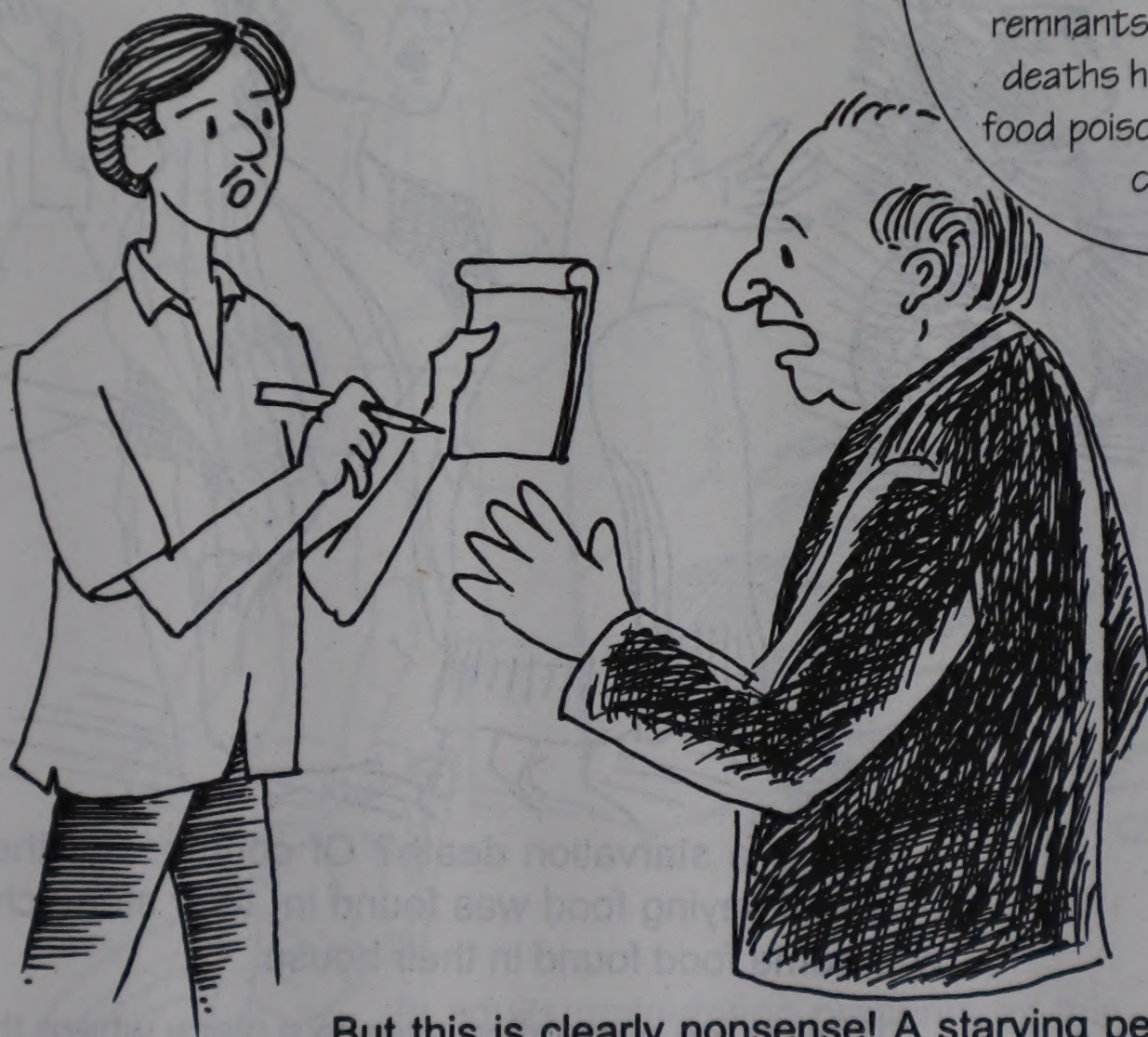
Why is such starvation not apparent?

Because in adults the most common cause of death in starving people is infection.

Diarrhoea, respiratory infections, malaria, tuberculosis - are the usual causes of death. And thus starvation and undernutrition deaths are attributed to death by natural causes.

In Kasipur village of Orissa there were reports of large number of deaths due to starvation. When asked this is what the district administration had to say.

Sir, I'm told over 70 persons have died of starvation in this village

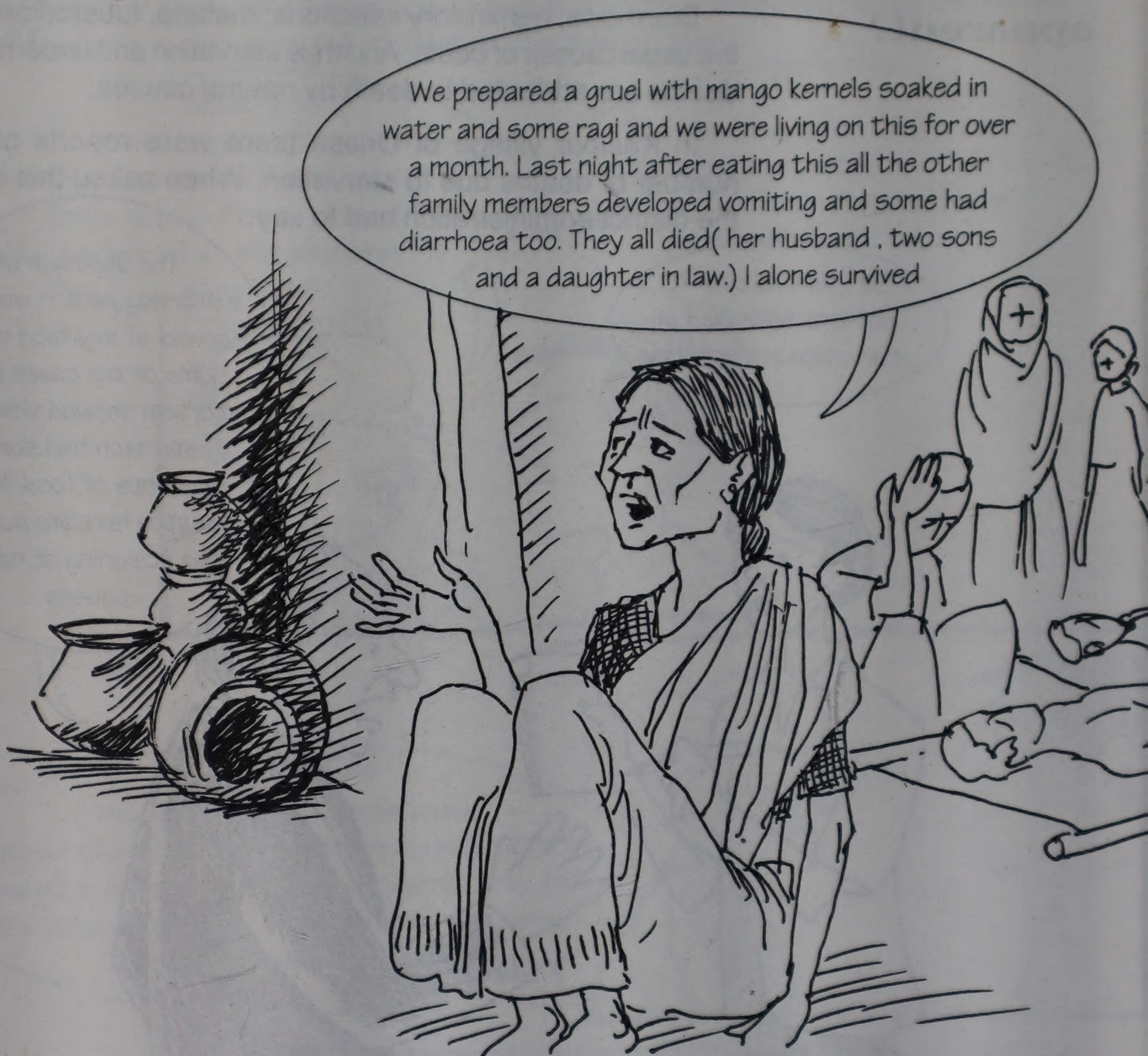


The stomach of a starving person would be devoid of any food but in some of the cases post mortem showed that the stomach had some remnants of food. Most deaths here are due to food poisoning or natural causes

But this is clearly nonsense! A starving person would eat anything available - leaves, roots, etc. So his or her stomach need not be empty. And starvation does not mean "Zero" food - it means not enough food to stay alive. So they may be eating very little amounts of food.

Starvation -a case study

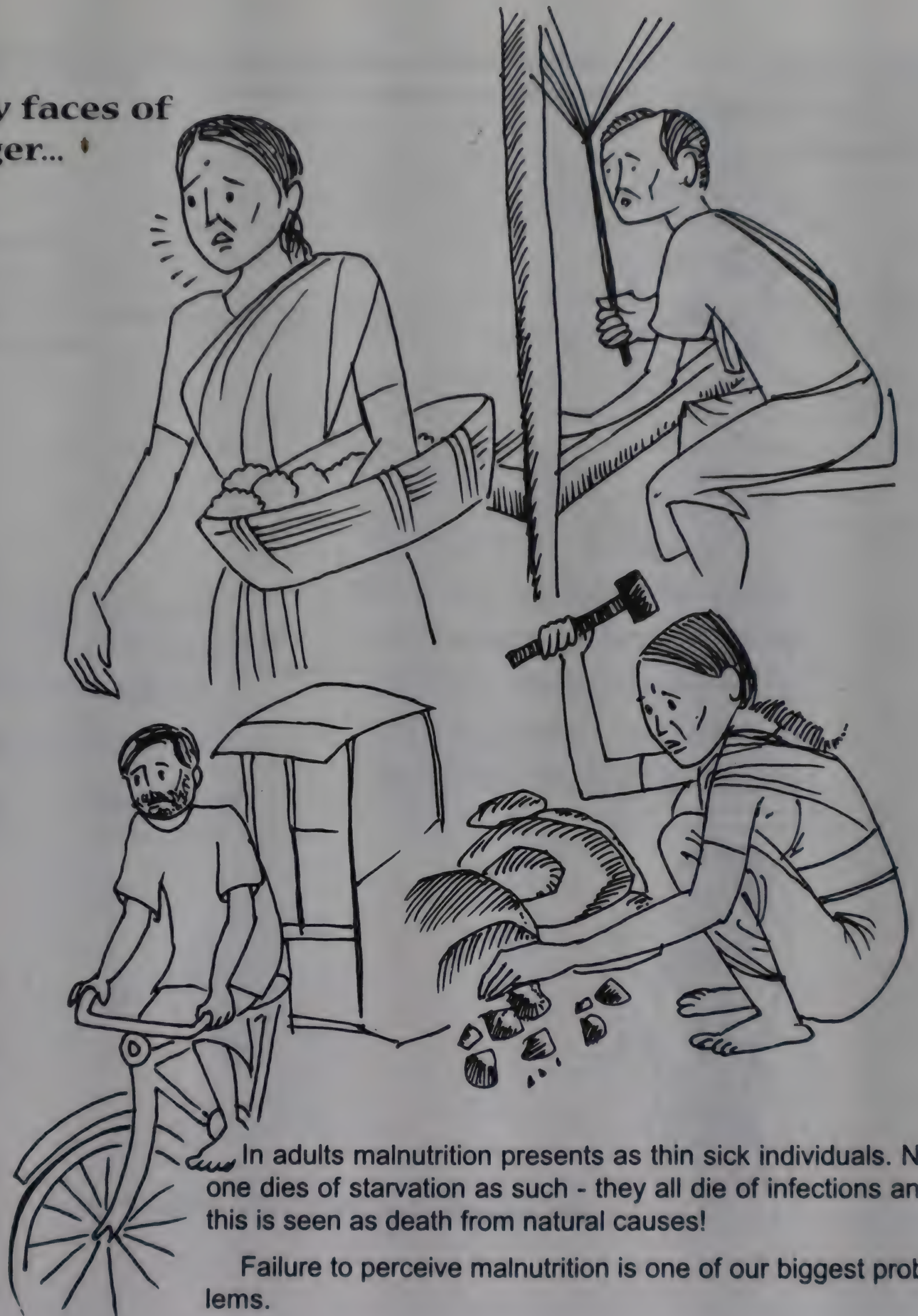
Listen to Almey Majhi relate how her family died at Bilamala 55 km from Rayagada, Kasipur-



Is this a starvation death? Of course. But the authorities denied it saying food was found in their stomachs and there was some food found in their house.

If this is the perception even in a place where there is widespread deaths due to starvation, people can argue that the death is not due to starvation then imagine the plight of the malnourished in all our villages and in the urban slums. No wonder hunger and malnutrition are not considered as major problems.

The many faces of hunger...

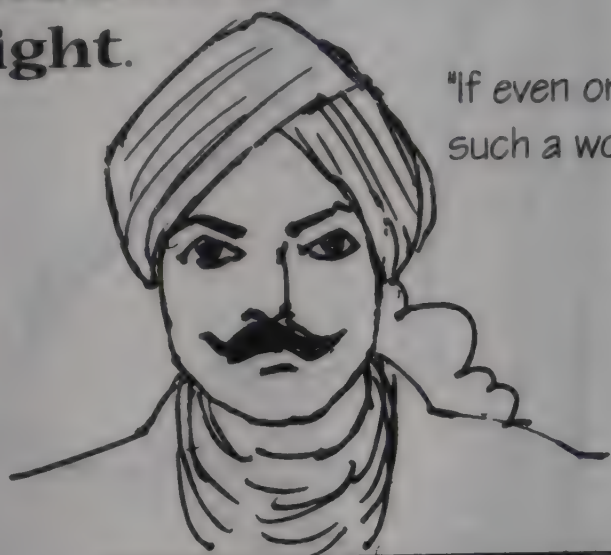


In adults malnutrition presents as thin sick individuals. No one dies of starvation as such - they all die of infections and this is seen as death from natural causes!

Failure to perceive malnutrition is one of our biggest problems.

Nutrition is a fundamen- tal right.

Nutrition is the basic requirement of health. It is the minimum need of a life of dignity- of life itself.



"If even one goes hungry...
such a world should not exist"

Quotation from
Subramania Bharathi,
great patriot, poet and one of India's earliest
freedom fighters

The 1974 World Food Conference
resolved that by 1984:

**'No child, woman or
man should go to bed
hungry and no human be-
ing's physical or mental
potential should be
stunted by malnutrition'**



World Food Summit in
Rome in 1996 recognises

**The fundamental right
of every human to be free
from hunger**



But achieving this still remains a distant dream....

Fact sheet on nutrition

Energy Sources:

How much food does a human being need ?. There are two major types of food that all humans need - food that gives energy and food that is needed to build and maintain the body structure. The energy the body needs is measured in a unit called kilocalories.(kcal). An adult male doing a sedentary job like a school teacher requires about 2700 kcal per day for men and about 2250 calories per day for a woman.

This energy can be obtained from two types of food - food that contains carbohydrates and food that contains fats.

1 gm of Carbohydrates give about 4kcal of energy; They come from starches- grains, root foods(like potatoes) and from sugars(sugar, honey, jaggery).

1 gm of Fats provide about 9kcal of energy. Oil and ghee provides fats. Animal foods and some plant foods like groundnut, coconut (well, all the foods from which oil can be extracted) are also rich sources of fats.

Ideally about 70% of our energy requirement should come from carbohydrates and about 30 % should come from fats.

We on the other hand who do hard labour need over 3500 calories per day.

That would mean about 450 gm per day of grain and about 90 gm of fats for me, a sedentary worker and about 600 gm of grain and about 120 gm of fat per day for you -a manual worker.

But what if I cant afford these fats

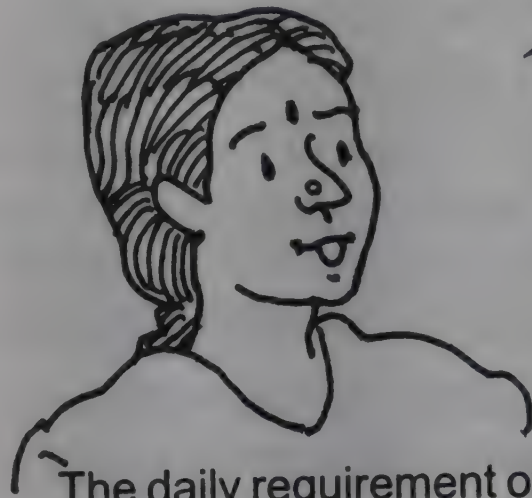
Then you'll have to take over 875 gm of grain daily or about 25 kg of rice/wheat per month

I could not afford that either

Fact sheet on nutrition -Proteins

Proteins, which are needed for building the body, are obtained from milk, eggs, fish, meat, and from plant foods like lentils(dals), groundnuts, beans and to a lesser extent from grains.(about 10% of grain is protein).

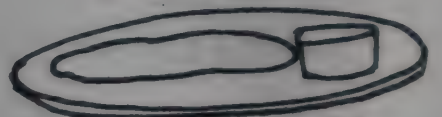
That is why all diets have rice and sambar or rotis and dal , or why idlis have a right mixture of rice and dal .Do not forget - most of traditional cooking is quite a scientific enterprise



The daily requirement of protein is about 65 gm /day. If all the protein we need were to come from milk and eggs which are the best digested and absorbed and most complete of proteins - about 40 gm of protein would be enough. An egg has about 8 gm of protein. Though grains have little protein we eat a lot of it and much of our protein comes from this. However grain proteins lack some essential components, which can be got from dals.



IDLIS



ROTI DAL

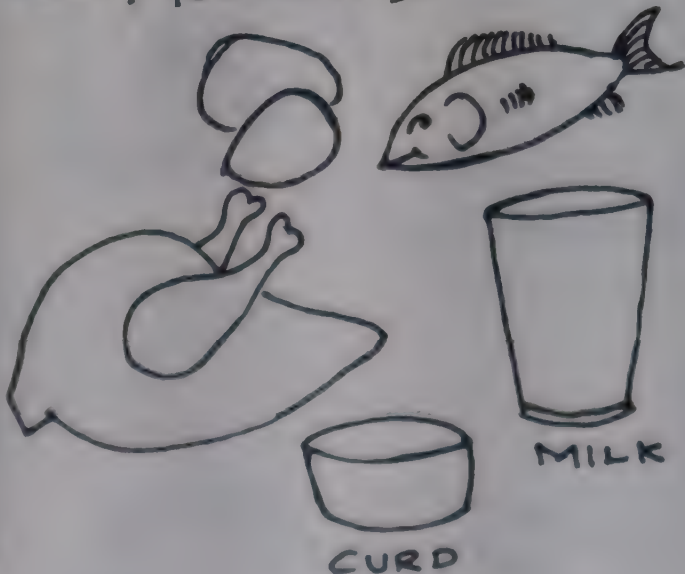


RICE SAMBAR

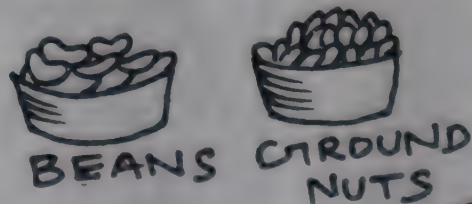


RICE FISH

BEST PROTEINS



BETTER PROTEINS



DAL

GOOD PROTEINS



GRAINS



POTATOES

Fact sheet on nutrition - the minor nutrients

Other than these two major components (energy and proteins) there are three other essential components. We call them minor not because they are less important but because the amounts needed are little. They are

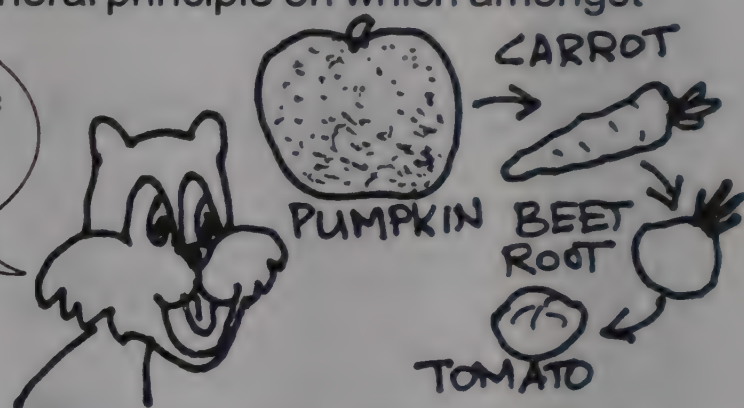
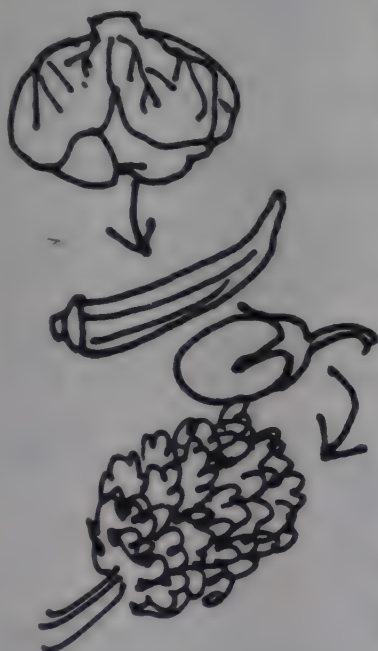
a. Minerals - iron, phosphorus, calcium, magnesium, zinc, copper - most of these are got from all animal foods as well as from leafy vegetables and fruits and nuts

b. Vitamins- these are some organic essential substances- these are also mainly got from leafy vegetables and fruits as well as from animal foods

c. Dietary fibre- this is the packing of plant food - this is not digested but it increases water holding capacity and provides the bulk for feces. Thus it is essential to prevent constipation- the need is of 15 to 20 gm /day.

In summary all three of these minor essentials can be got if there is some animal food(milk in case of vegetarians) plus green leafy vegetables .The general principle on which amongst this is based is -

The greener it is, the redder it is the better it is

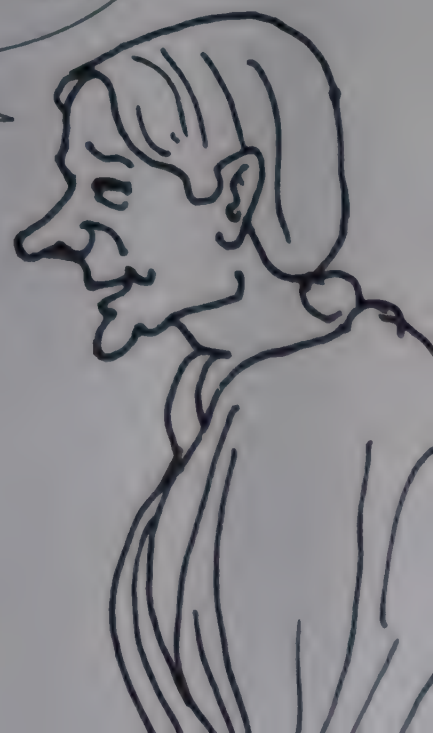
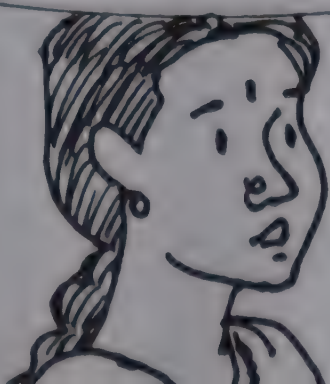


Thus mangoes, papayas, carrots, beetroots, greens, drumsticks, ladies finger are excellent while foods like cabbage and chow-chow, are welcome but not as rich .

Also as a general principle

The more unprocessed and less cooked the food the more it has of such minor nutrients.

That's why parboiled and milled rice is better than milled polished rice, whole wheat is better than maida, fresh fruits are better than fruit juices, jaggery is better than sugar, carrot in salads more nutritious than cooked carrot etc. ...



Dietary Knowledge and the lack of it.

The normal diet of most traditional cultures have all that is needed for a complete diet. Its not lack of knowledge that causes malnutrition.

However when traditional patterns change due to changes in lifestyles or earnings the changes that result in diet may not be for the best. Even so, lack of knowledge as such is seldom the main problem.

Since lack of energy foods makes one hungry, when money is limited this is what is spent on first. Foods that give the minor essentials and proteins cost more and are purchased only after energy needs are met. Which means that the diets of many increasingly lack these essentials. This makes one susceptible to disease especially in children and though this too causes malnutrition it is seldom recognised as such.

Of these components iron is one of the most important and about 70 to 80% of our women are anaemic largely due to lack of adequate dietary iron).



Child Malnutrition- the Urgency

The problem of malnutrition is much higher in children and much more urgent....

The urgency of the issue also arises because they are children - the effects of malnutrition are at the least lifelong stunting of growth.—

*"We are guilty of many errors and many faults
But our worst crime is abandoning our children
Neglecting the fountain of life
Many of the things we need can wait,
But the child cannot,
Right now is the time the bones are being
formed,
The blood is being made and the senses are being
developed
To him we cannot answer "tomorrow,"
His name is today"*

-Gabriela Mistrala- Chilean poet



The South Asian Enigma

Why is malnutrition so high in South Asian countries?



We need to recognize this. Our child Nutrition situation is about the worst in the world. Its a shame - more so because we'd like to see ourselves as a superpower!

Country	% of infants with low birth weight	% of under 5's with moderate or severe	
		underweight	stunting
India	33%	53%	52%
Afganistan	20%	48%	52%
Sri Lanka	25%	34%	18%
Tanzania	14%	27%	42%
South Africa	-	9%	23%
China	6%	10%	17%
Brazil	8%	6%	11%
Mexico	7%	8%	18%
All Developed Nations	6%	1%	2%

Source: The State of world's children 2001, UNICEF

The only countries with worse stunting are Angola, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia & North Korea. In underweight children only two countries are worse than us. And in low birth weight babies, we are at the absolute bottom of the world!

Such high malnutrition levels cannot be explained by our poverty alone! This has been called the South Asian enigma !

The Failure To Notice Child Malnutri- tion



But we do not see so
much malnutrition in our
area.



and
the Failure
To act on it...

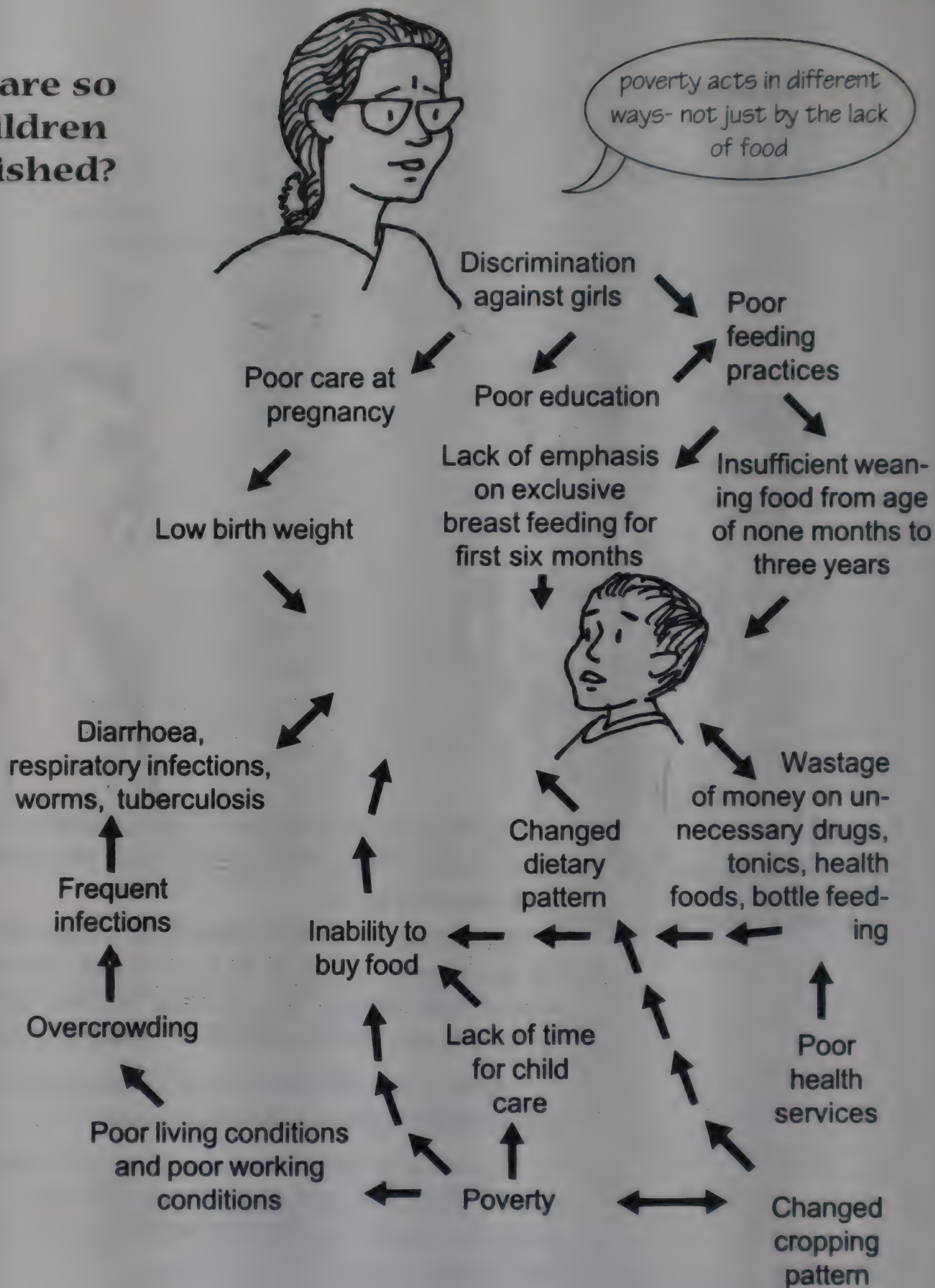
These children do not look malnourished but they are. They are stunted. Those who look like three year olds are really five year olds and so on.

Malnutrition in India is much more than can be accounted for by poverty alone. If all nations are ranked according to malnutrition levels after adjusting for their GDP, India is the second worst nation in the world - second only to Bangladesh.

* About 35 % families are below the poverty line, but about 55 to 70% of children below five years of age have malnutrition

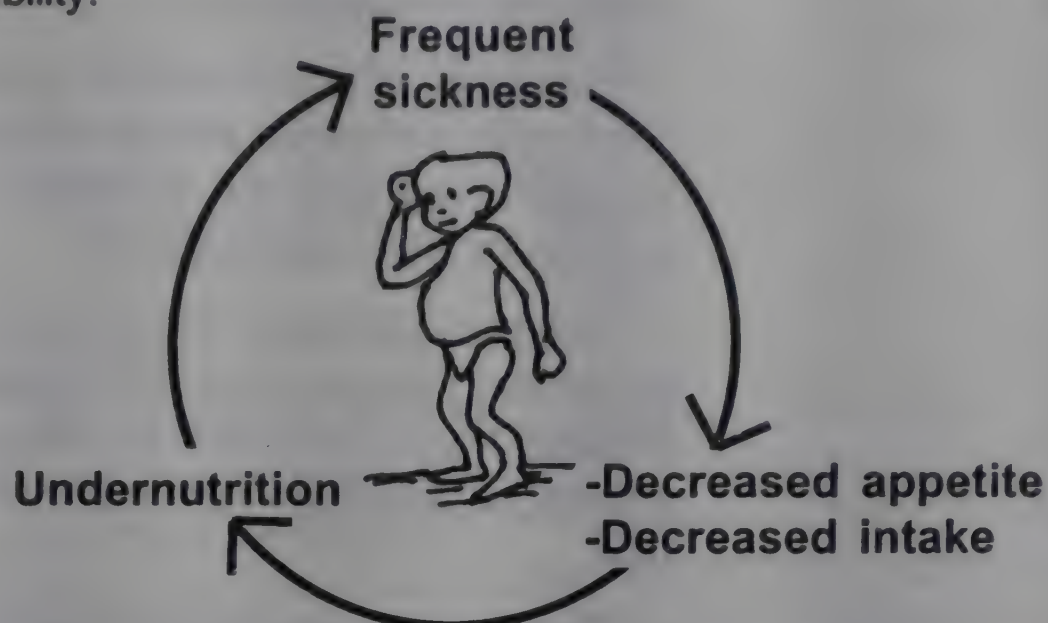
* Moreover, as food is the first priority in any household and as the quantity of food required for a child is relatively small — it is possible even within the deprived situation to prevent child malnutrition,. Yet we have failed to do so : Why?

But why are so many children malnourished?



Disease -An Important Cause Of Child Malnutrition

Repeated infections and anemia lower the child's appetite. The body's nutrition needs for coping with the disease leads to a higher food requirement but most diseases cause a lack of appetite. A malnourished body is far more susceptible to infection and disease. Not only do the malnourished get disease earlier, it lasts longer in them and causes more death and disability.



Thus malnutrition and disease become a vicious cycle.

Yet most of these childhood diseases can be prevented by simple measures. Like handwashing alone-before food preparation and after defecation- can reduce diarrhoea dramatically. And also one has to emphasise the necessity of maintaining as high a food intake as possible during illness and catch up feeding after illness.

This means
the undernourished child gets ill
more often, the illness last longer in
them and they die or become disabled
more often



Fact sheet on child nutrition

Up to the age of six months breast milk is an adequate and complete food for all babies.

From the age of six months to one and half or even two years one should try and continue with breast milk. This helps to provide comfort to the baby and mother and provides some protection against disease and even to a limited extent against becoming pregnant again.

However, after six months, breast milk is no longer a sufficient source of either energy or proteins or other nutrients. By the age of one year the nutrients from breast milk are too little to even take into calculations.

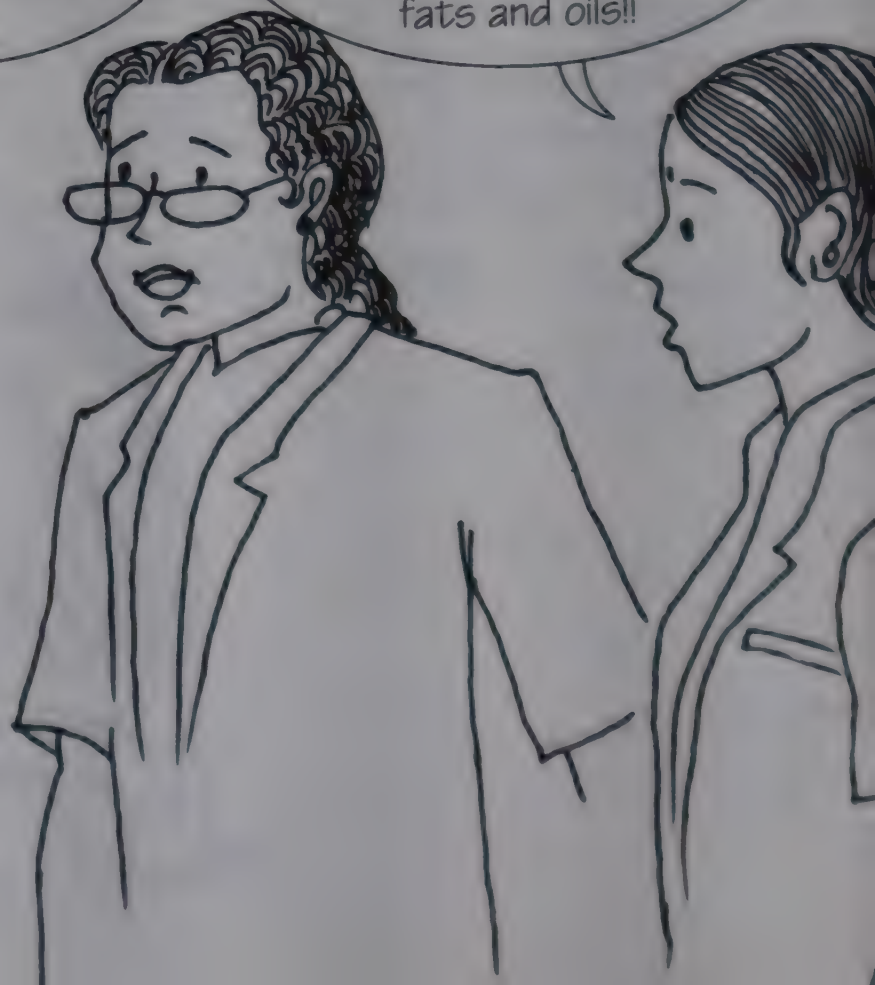
Children at the age of one year require half as many calories as adults. That is, other than breast milk. (which anyway has become very insufficient by then). And they require as much protein as adults as this is the time the child's body is being built.

Thus a one year old child looks small - about one fifth the size of its mother. So we assume that it needs correspondingly less food. But the child needs food for growth and energy while adults need food only for energy. The child must therefore get half as much energy and about the same amount of proteins!! Or else it will be stunted.

You mean this one year old which is not even one fifth my size needs half my food

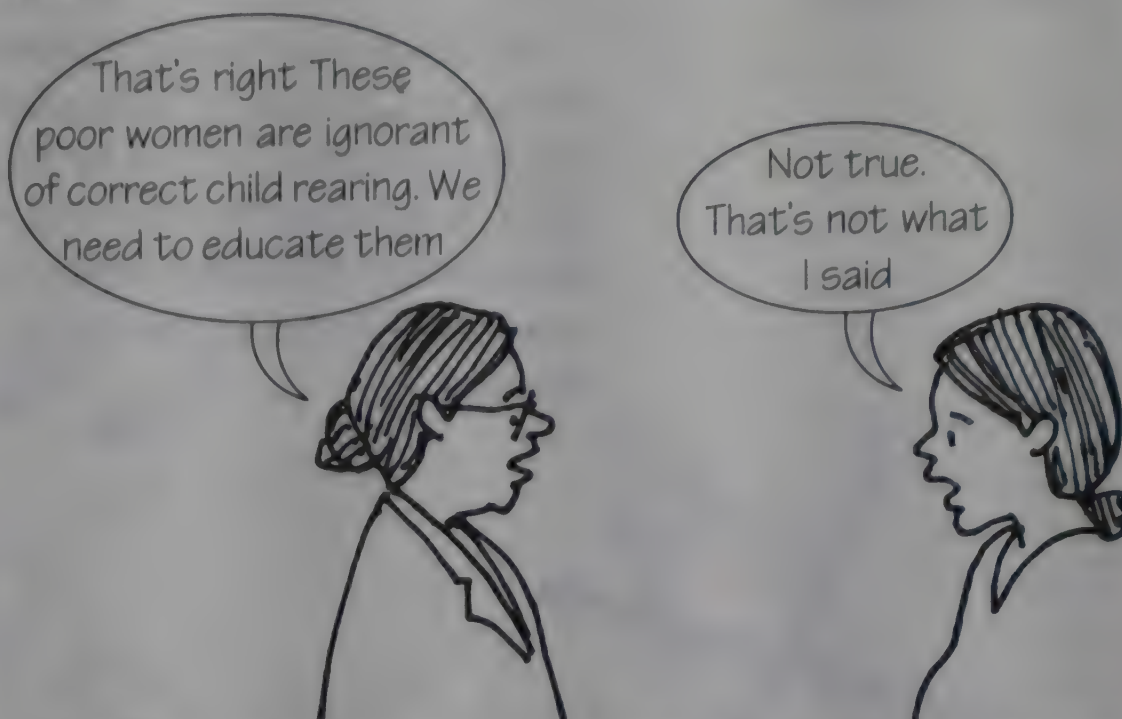
Yes and when it comes to protein rich food- like milk and eggs it needs just as much as you do.

And mind you since its stomach is small one needs frequent feeding - about six meals per day and a lot more fats and oils!!

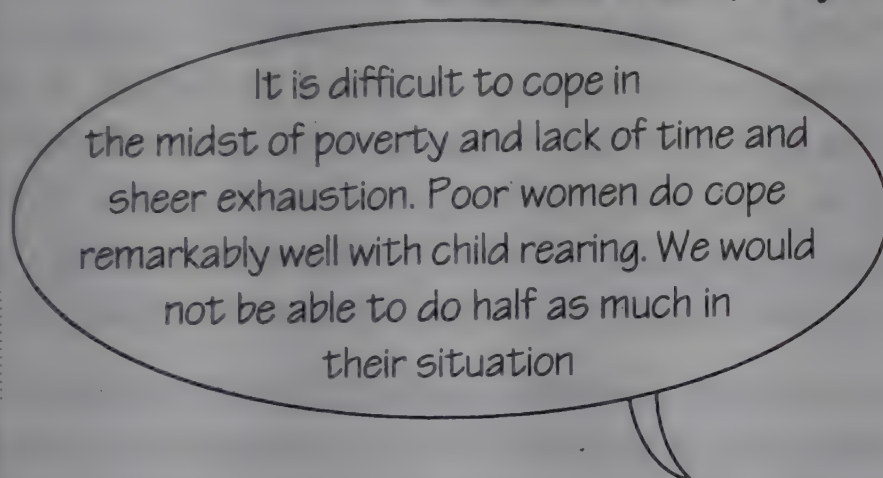


Understanding Child malnutrition: incorrect feed- ing practices

Incorrect feeding practices are also a major factor in child malnutrition



No. This is not what we are saying. Poor people do not have any extra "ignorance" of correct child rearing. If the poor mother bottle feeds so too does the well to do mother. If TV ads con a poor family into buying costly baby foods instead of locally available foods, they also con the well-to-do family.

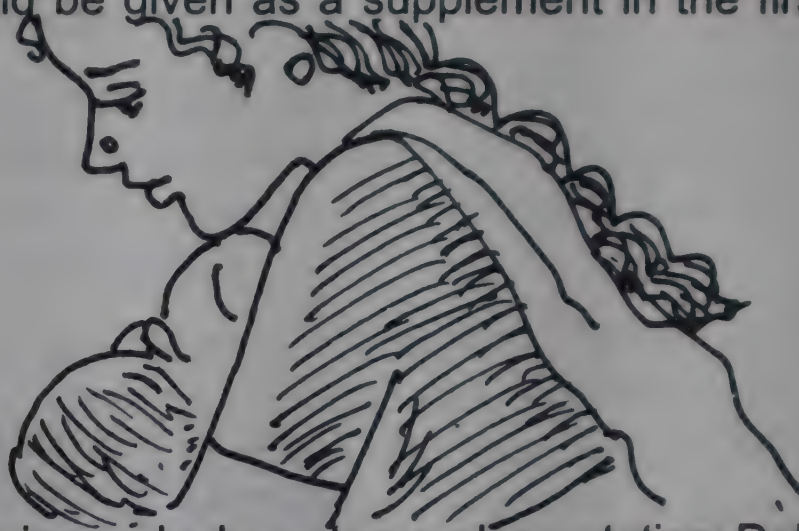


However critical choices have to be made in allocation of limited resources and the choices made are often wrong due to the way healthy cultural practices have got displaced by unhealthy ones. Moreover the adverse impact of a poor choice is more in the poor household. In such a context health education becomes critical.

Correct Feeding practices

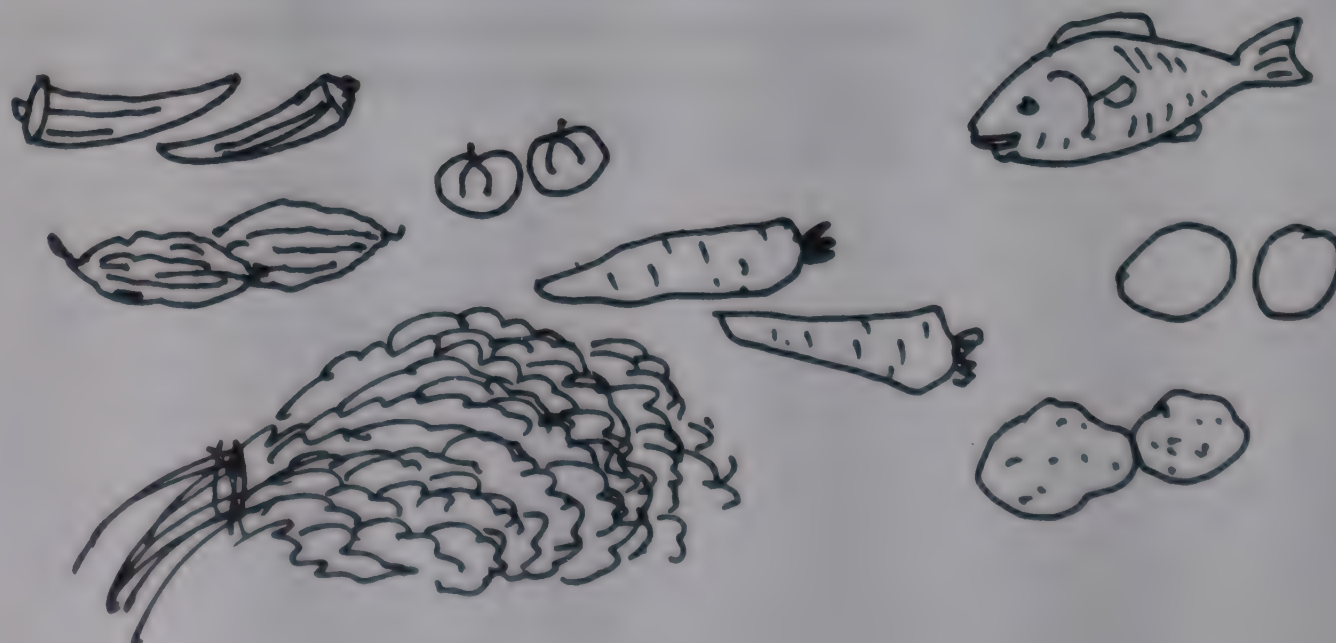
Here are some examples of critical health education inputs:

a) Exclusive breast feeding. Often failure to breastfeed is attributed to lack of adequate milk, itself a creation of wrong initial practices, or due to doctors advice during illness. Bottle feed supplementation and water supplementation is often considered essential when in reality they are dangerous. Not even water should be given as a supplement in the first six months



b) Timely Weaning and adequate supplementation: Delayed weaning and gross underestimation of the quantity of supplementary feeding needed is the major wrong practice. In times of tight food allocation a child receiving the breast is easily but wrongly assumed as having received its needs. A child of one year needs half as much calories and as much protein as its mother. The necessity of frequent feeding (six times per day) to be able to provide so much calories is under-recognised as is the need to add fats and oils to the child's diet

c) Variety in feeds - variety especially the addition of fats and oils and the greens and yellows are seldom followed. A lot of beliefs and food taboos contribute to the denial of fats and fruits and other highly nutritive items (eggs, fish). It is perhaps not coincidence that the very same items are seen as desirable for adult males.



Understanding child malnutrition : The role of patriarchal society

Maternal factors also contribute to child malnutrition.

a. The poorer the health status of the mother, the weaker the child.

f. The less care at pregnancy the women gets the weaker the child.

b. The lower the age at the time of child-birth, the weaker the child.

c. The lesser the space between children the weaker the child (if less than 4 years)

d. The more mal-nourished the mother, the weaker the child.

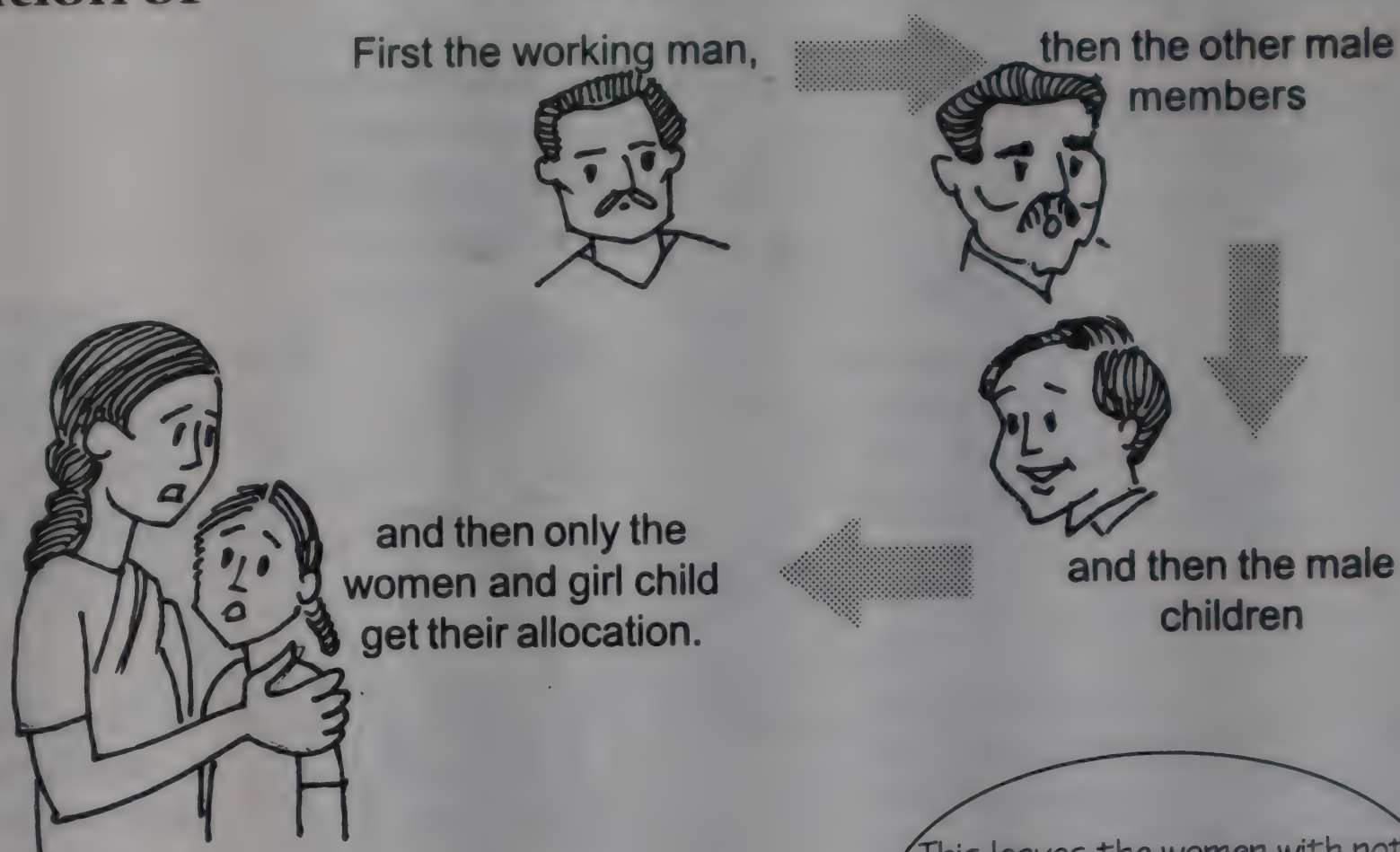
e. The less educated the mother, the weaker the child.



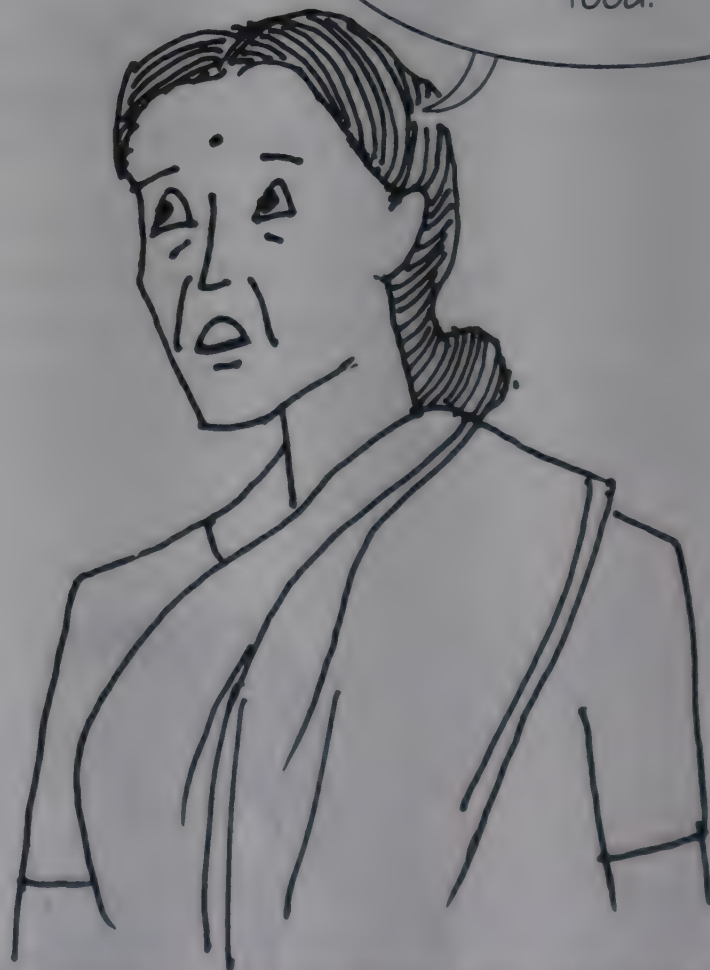
Indeed the only explanation for the south Asian enigma is the poor health status of women due to much higher levels of gender discrimination in the south Asian context.

Patriarchy: The allocation of food

The allocation of food within the poor household: in a patriarchal society



This leaves the women with not only less quantity, but also deprived of the more nutritious food.



However if the family understands that the child's life is at threat because of this inadequate allocation - the extra share needed may become available to the child.

Patriarchy: Time available for childcare

This is another critical determinant of malnutrition. The mother's time is especially crucial, even as we reiterate the role of other family members including men in childcare. Time is critically related to poverty and demonstrates the fact that poverty acts through more ways than food access alone. The problem is also part of the problems that working women face and relates to the inadequacy of child friendly day care centres.



Physical contact,
emotional stimuli
and play are essen-
tial to child growth.
And, as every mother
knows, it takes time
to just feed a child!!



Women's nutritional stress:

This reduced food allocation to women becomes a crisis in times of higher requirements -:

Malnutrition amongst adolescents especially adolescent girls : Adolescents require more energy and more proteins than at any stage of their life before or after. This is because it is a stage of active growth, of the formation of important body organs and it is a stage of considerable activity and exertion. Yet this is seldom recognised and often food to adolescent girls is restricted.

Malnutrition amongst pregnant and lactating women : This too is a stage of enhanced food requirement. Again, in many communities food is restricted at this time- partly due to discrimination and partly due to wrong beliefs. This causes serious harm to the mothers health and is one of the major contributors to the high incidence of low birth weight babies. About one out of every three new born babies in India is below the normal birth weight . India has one of the highest incidence of low birth weight babies anywhere in the world.

Maternal malnutrition gets exacerbated at lactation also when the women's body emaciates in its attempt to keep the breast milk going.



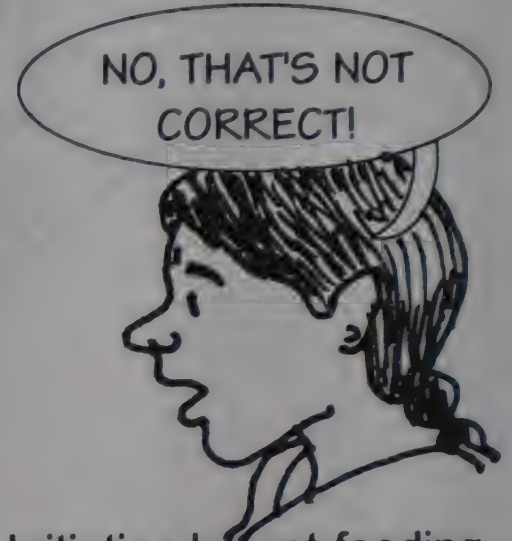
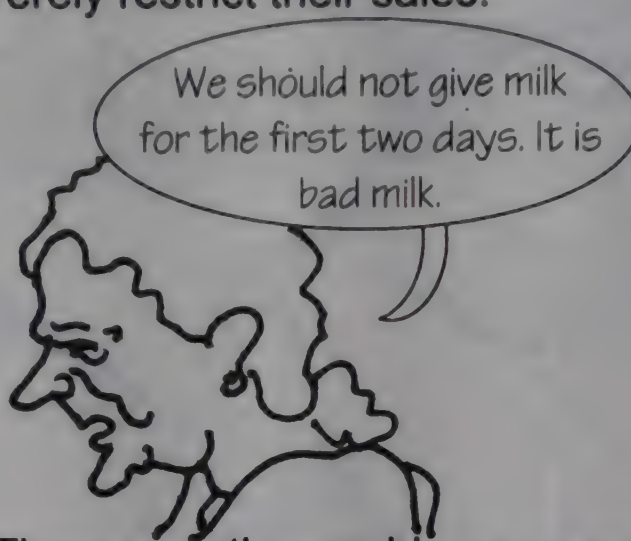
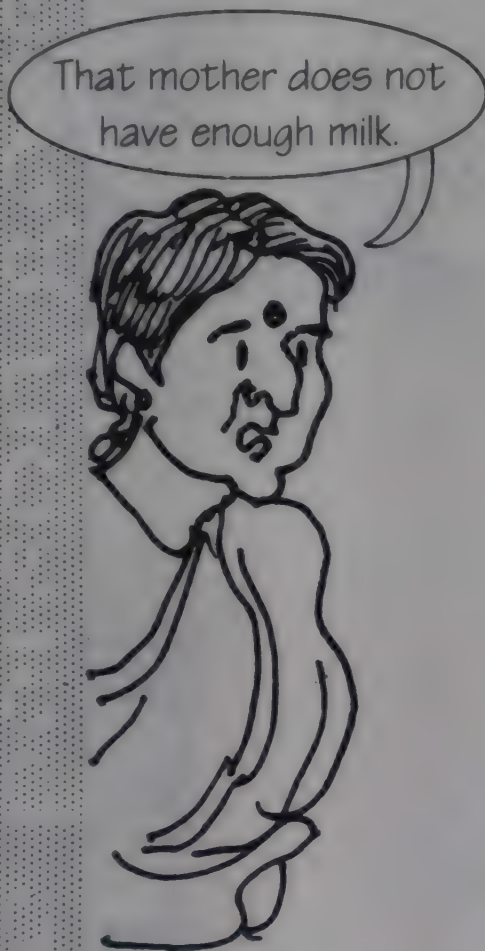
Breast feeding: Even this has to be fought for!!

Access to Breast-feeding is also - believe it or not - another major problem!! Mothers know the importance of breast feeding - BUT about 30% of children are not getting breast milk.

Baby food manufacturers propagate bottle feeding as more scientific and healthy when in practice bottle feeding is one of the most important contributors of baby illness and deaths.



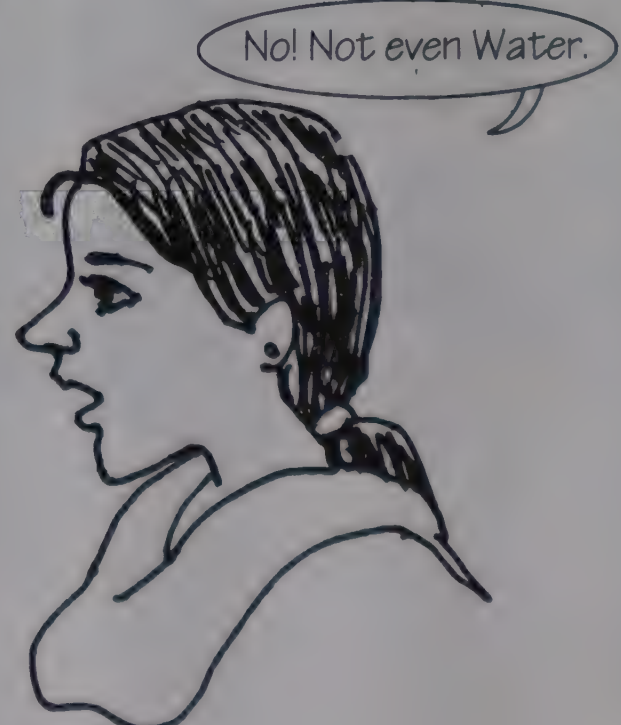
To Do: Ban advertisements for infant milk substitutes and severely restrict their sales.



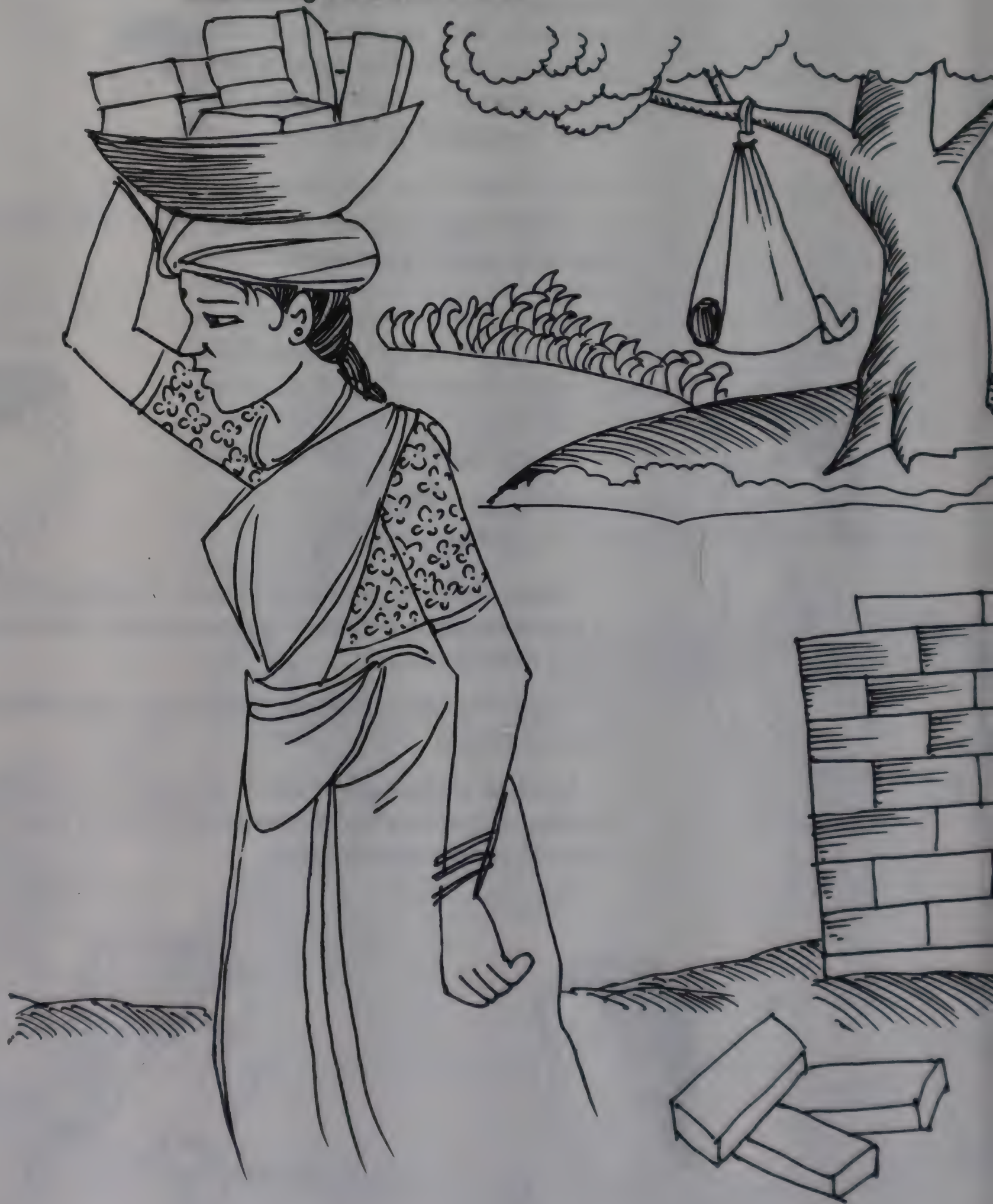
There are other problems as well: Initiating breast-feeding is complicated by a lot of erroneous beliefs and to the anxious it is a difficult process.

To Do: Support breast milk initiation through health personnel and volunteers.

Medical profession is often too quick to proscribe breast feeding. Especially the necessity of exclusive breast feeding is not well understood by them.



Working mothers are not provided the time and space to breastfeed their infants. Since most Indian mothers are working mothers, securing recognition for breastfeeding as a basic human entitlement is one of the most important dimensions of addressing child malnutrition.



The role of the health sector:

The family is seldom passive. It makes many efforts to cope with the child's repeated ill health and poor growth. Due to commercial pressures and resulting changing norms of "good care" a lot of family efforts are wasted. The best example of this is the phenomenal expense in diarrhoeal management, most of which is useless and irrational and some of which is harmful. Commercial baby foods given, diluted (because they cannot afford it otherwise) is another major drain from the poorest of households to the richest of companies in the richest of nations. Medical care thus, so long accused of under recognising malnutrition now increasingly appears as part of the problem!

It is ironic -how from the poorest families of the world's poorest regions, and from the weakest member of such a family, the world's largest multinational in the world's richest countries manages to squeeze out just that bit more money.



Understanding malnutrition

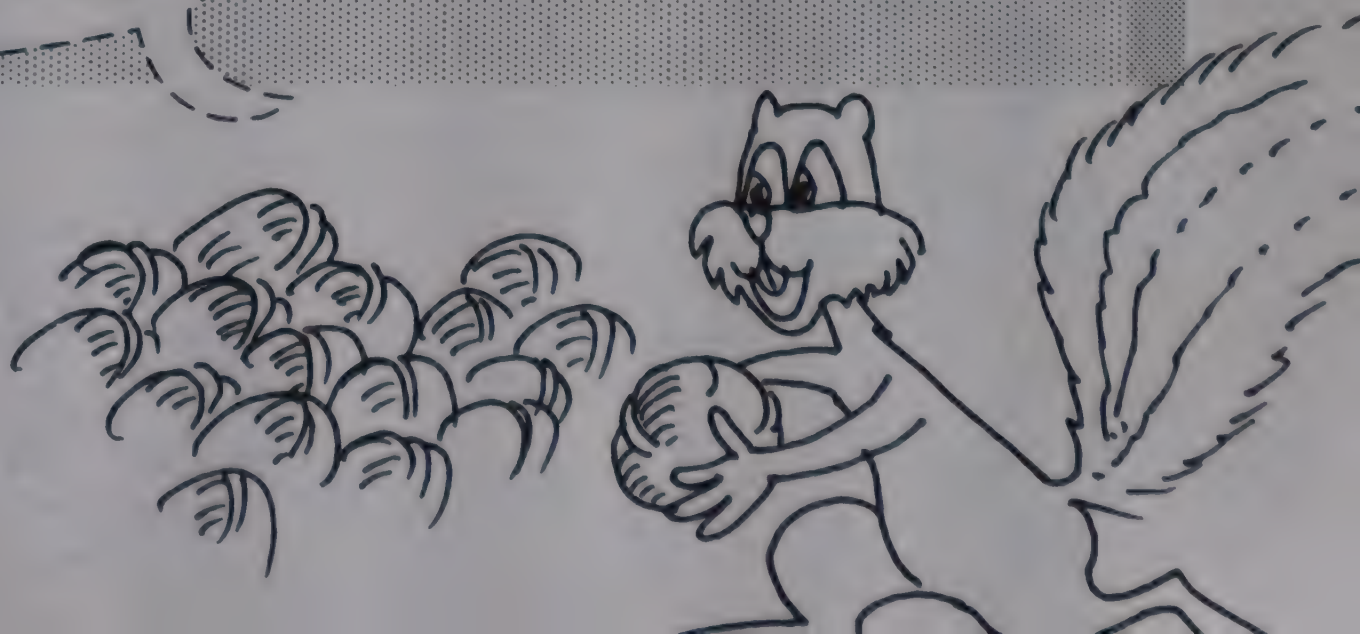
A quick summary:

- ♦ Hunger and malnutrition are widespread in our society.
- ♦ The major cause of hunger and malnutrition is poverty and the consequent inability to buy the food the family needs.
- ♦ Child malnutrition levels in India are amongst the highest in the world and cannot be accounted for by lack of ability to buy food alone.
- ♦ Patriarchy is a major cause of malnutrition of woman and children.
- ♦ Lack of knowledge leads to erroneous feeding choices for children in a context of scarce resources and a recently changed cultural context.
- ♦ The lack of public awareness of the dimensions of hunger is a major obstacle to addressing this issue.
- ♦ The health sector and health industry not only fail to perceive and address this problem adequately, often they compound the problem through promotion of wrong choices for their narrow commercial gain.



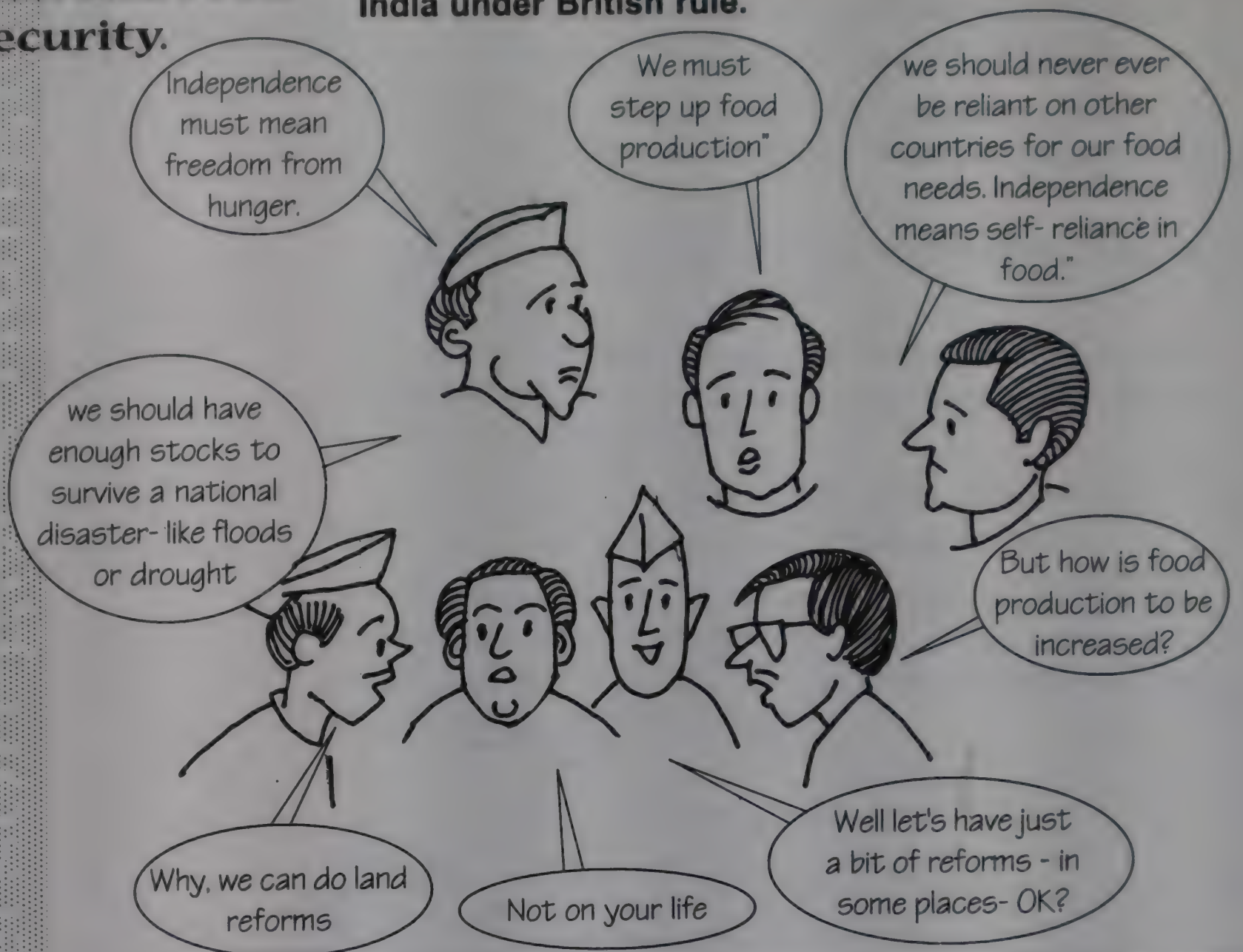
That means that not only do I have enough food now, the likelihood of starvation tomorrow is also negligible

Food Security



Food Production and Food Security.

At independence the central concern of Indian planners was to prevent recurrent famines - a regular feature of India under British rule.



Is food production still a major problem?

Certainly not. Especially in the nation as a whole. At present the nation has over 6.5 crore tonnes food grains in stock against 2 crore tonnes required to be in stocks.

The grain production in the country rose from 17.5 crore tonnes in 80s to 20.6 crore tonnes in 90s.: There has been a surplus wheat production of 7.5 crore tonnes and in rice there is a 9.0 crore tonnes surplus.

Remember food grain stock should not be seen as fiscal deficit if govt uses it for employment generation, and cost of holding stocks would decrease proportionately.



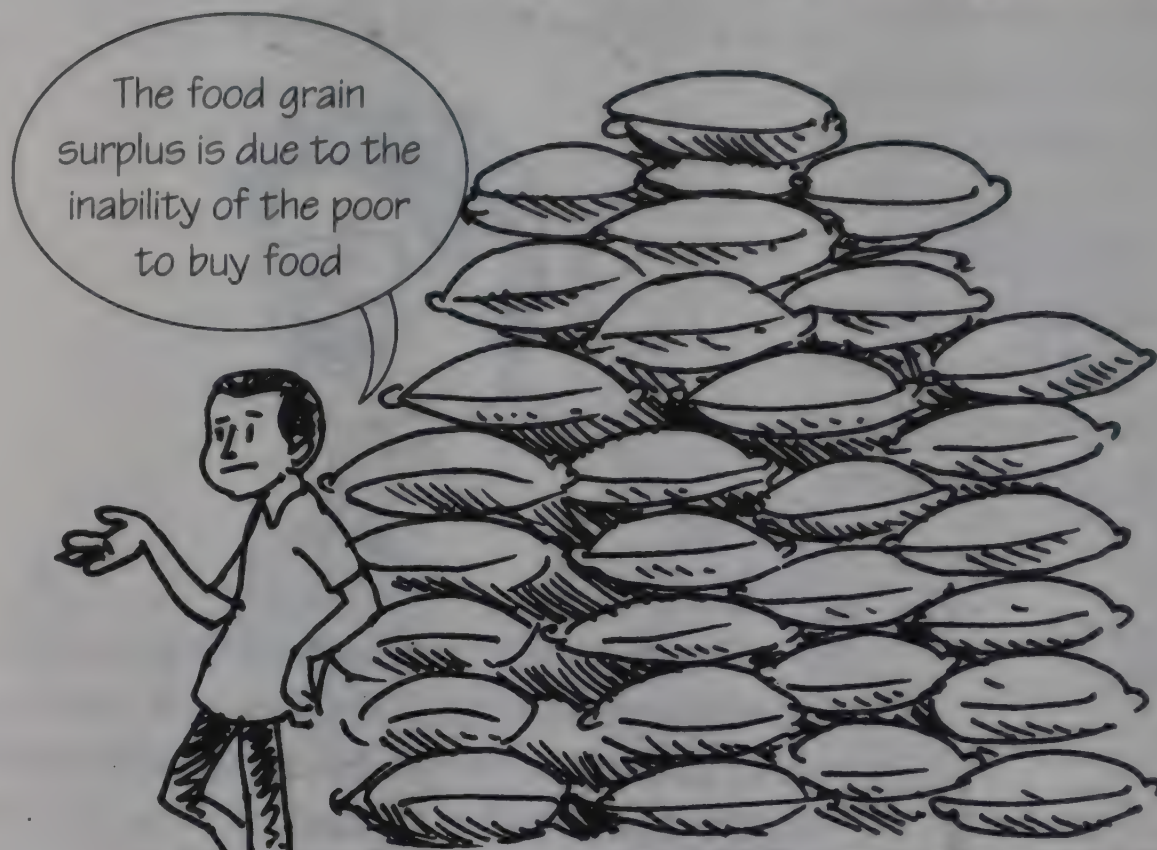
The central problem for the government has become how to manage its stocks. It costs over 5000 crores to store it alone. And as they have run out of storage space much of it is stored in the open under tarpaulins. The government has therefore decided to export the grains at the subsidised rate- so as to manage its stocks.



So is food security achieved.?

Partly- but there are problems ahead!!

Whereas the grain production has increased, the rate of growth in food grains declined from 3.54 % in the 1980s to 1.8% in the 1990s. As a result there was a fall in per capita availability of food grain in the economy as a whole- 505.5 gms/ day in 1997 to 470.4gms in 1999, to 458.6 gms in 2000.



The conclusion—we are NOT producing enough to meet nutritional needs but producing more than what people can buy.



Food security and the subsistence economy.

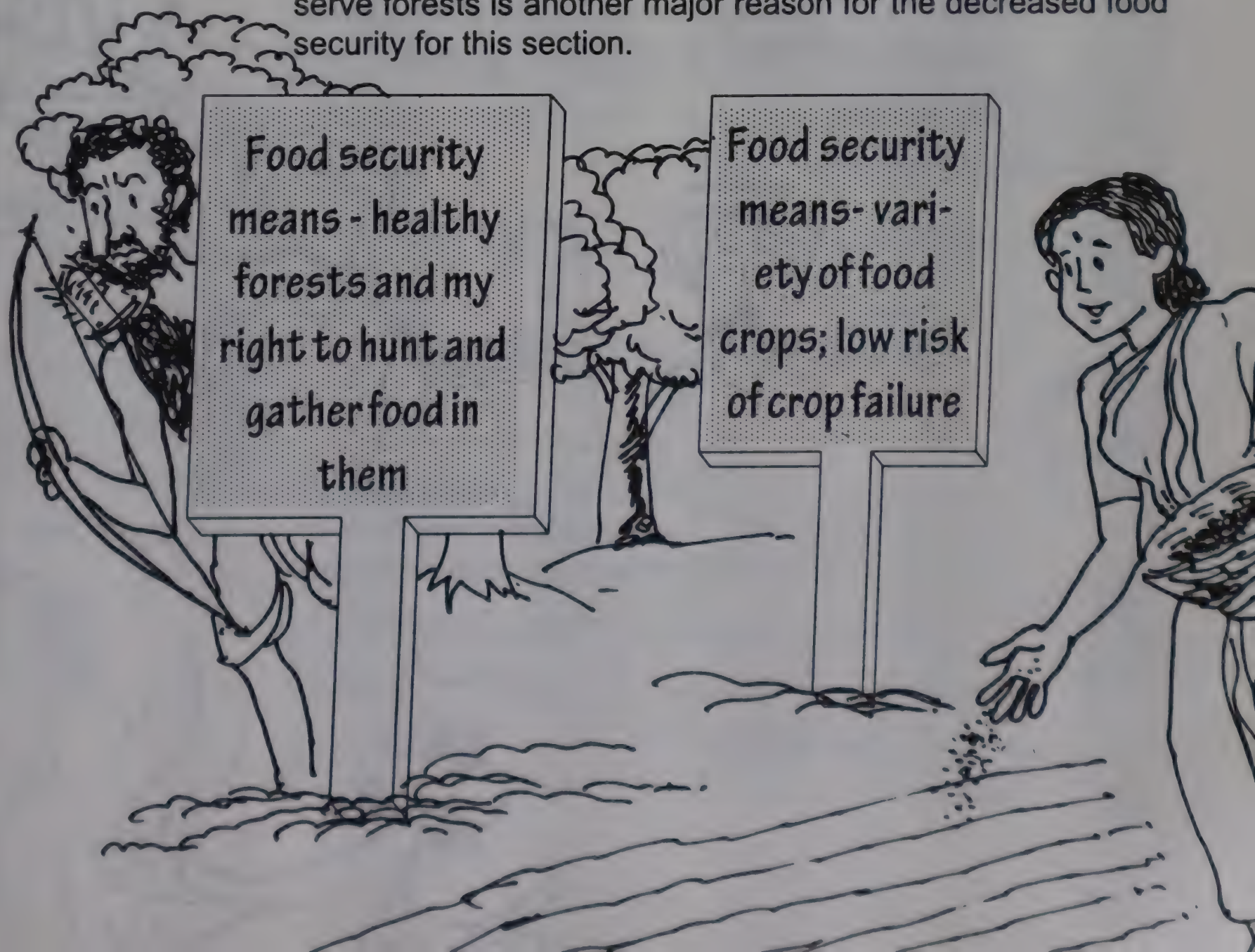
Food supply is a problem in areas of subsistence agriculture.

Traditionally a major part of the population did not buy food. They grew it. Or they gathered it. Like the adivasi sections do - even today.

The shift to production for the market : Once most agriculture was for home consumption. But even in the post independence period, even if there was production for the market, some production essential for food security was for the home. And this was of a mix of crops -of different food grains well adapted to that area - indigenous grain species and millets- were the most important component of this.

In Chattisgarh area for example there are over 10,000 indigenous varieties of rice - many of them were not high yielding but they were less risky and needed less chemical inputs and were well adapted to that climate. As monocultures of high yield varieties take over, the frequency of crop failure increases, and input costs rise.

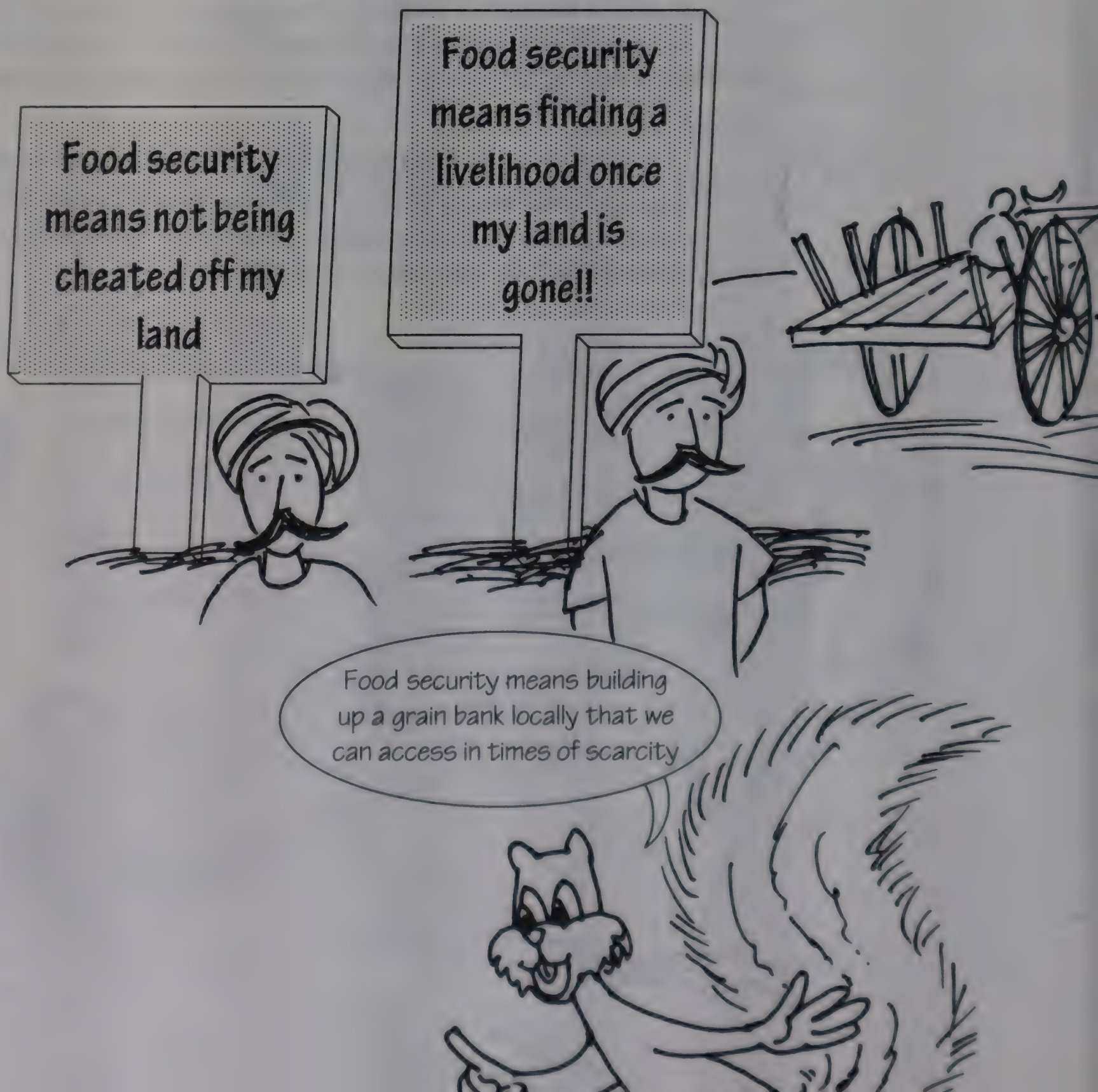
Inability to use food resources of forest due to its degradation and their being shut out of it and loss of biodiversity in reserve forests is another major reason for the decreased food security for this section.



The high starvation areas:

Adivasis who once owned good and fertile lands were divested of it over the years and now are now working on it as labourers. They no longer gather their foods from the forest or produce it with local knowledge and inputs. They have to buy their food. And the depressed wages do not allow this. So often they migrate in increasing numbers to the cities to work as migrants, returning to their lands and villages for a few months every year when there is work locally.

This is typical of all high starvation areas: The Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput area of Orissa, Jharkand and Chattisgarh districts, southern Rajasthan districts and so on. In the 60's Kalahandi had 1.18 lakh tonnes surplus and Bolangir had 0.661 tonnes surplus. But then ragi was replaced by oilseeds and pulse production. Over 10,000 indigenous varieties of rice were replaced by soya bean in Chattisgarh!



Food security and the small farmer:

This is not only in adivasis areas. This is the problem of the entire small and marginal peasant families of the country and they constitute the majority of the farming households.

Hunger for the small farmer is largely a result of

a. The shift to commercial crops and contraction of area under food crops

b. The decline in grain production for the family's food security and the technological choices this involves. Earlier on at least part of their production included low risk moderate yielding crop's which provided enough food for consumption. Now shifting to high risk high yield crops means more frequent crop failures. Earlier, low chemicals options were affordable but current high chemical options need timely credit which is often not available.

c. The tapering of yields - soil, water and pest factors have pushed yields down and the entire small and marginal farmer section becomes a food buyer. All these factors affect the small farmer more. For example-almost all small farmers now have to buy water - whereas two decades earlier it was available in wells or shared from tanks.

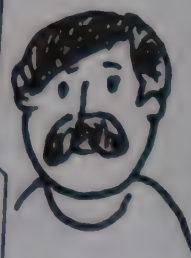
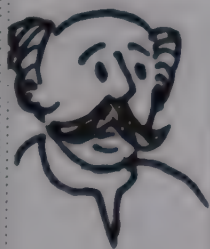
d. Small and marginal farmers are forced into distress sale of paddy due to low rates at 2 Rs/kg to meet basic needs of oil, clothes, salt; plus low minimum wages; The procurement process is often not accessible to them.

Food security means- growing food for home consumption- not pushed into growing only for the market

Food security means- less risk of crop failure

Food security means- equitable and rational use of water for irrigation

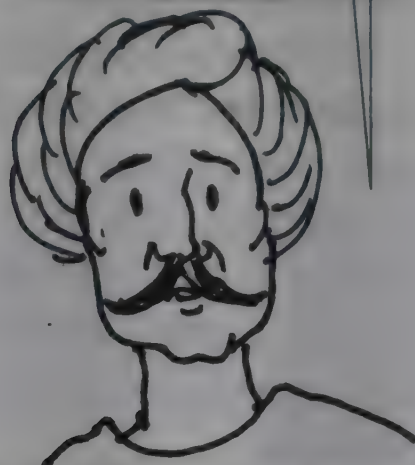
Food security means- an assured price at the market when I go to sell



Food security and the landless la- bourer:

This is also the problem of landless agricultural labour and artisans:

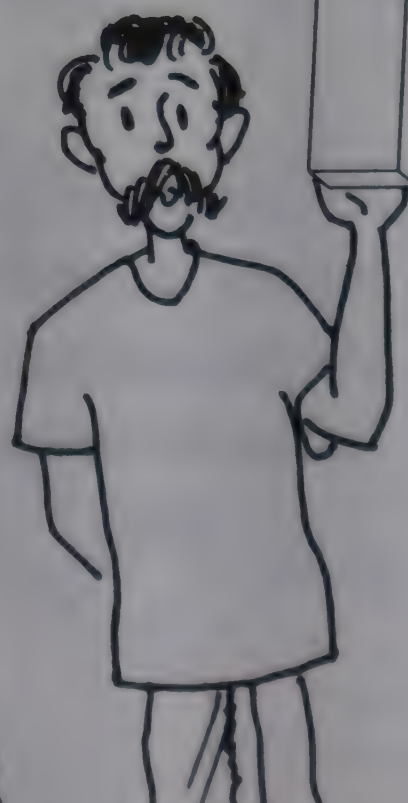
Used to be paid in grain. Now
are paid in cash and are paid too
low.



The agricultural labourers are net food buyers. In a bad year jobs are low and price of food is high. Traditional means of food access (non - market mediated) is lost and they are too poor to access the markets.

Food security
means - receiving
part of my wages
as food grains

Food security
means- receiving a
decent minimum
wage



Food security and the poor

As for the rest of the poor- the unorganised manufacturing sector workers, the urban workers- all of them are buyers of grain and as food prices go up they are pushed into hunger.

The incomes of most people increases slowly if at all. But food has always grown costlier.

I remember
just a few years back rice
was four rupees a kilo - and we used
to complain about it being costly. Now at ten
rupees a kilo it is considered cheap. But
my daily wage has gone up from
twenty rupees a day to
forty rupees a day.



He thinks his
wages have gone up. But actu-
ally his real wages have come
down from 5 kilos of rice per day
to four kilos
of rice per day.



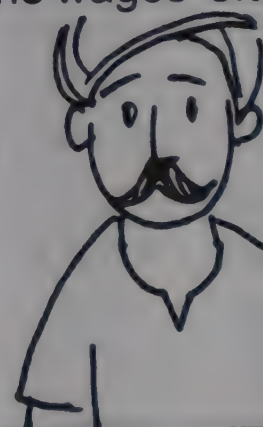
Wages rise through united action of the workers. And since many sections are unorganised and since there are many hands that seek work and little work available the wages often do not rise as fast as the prices.



Food
security
means getting
unionised



Food
security means
holding down
the food
prices



Food
security means
A public distri-
bution system

New threats to food security

India has signed the world trade agreements that are a part of the new international economic order. As a result there are pressures to persuade us to import our food grains from the West- which wants to find a market for its surplus. So as a result we have been forced to remove all curbs on agricultural imports and forced to cut back our subsidies to our farmers. But when we try to export, we find their markets heavily protected and subsidised.



New threats to food security

Dependence technologies

Many new seed varieties are such that farmers cannot harvest them and plant them again. Each time seeds have to be bought from the company and they can increase costs. Moreover their seeds require more and more chemical inputs.

"Psst!
Why don't you try our
'Terminator' Seeds? I can
guarantee that once you
buy it, you will keep coming
back to us for
more!

We will raise the price. But I
won't tell you that now !"

Food security
means - seed banks
and knowledge that
we can control at
the local level.

Food security
means national self-
reliance on seeds
and agricultural
inputs.

New seeds are made from germplasm found in related wild varieties and from numerous local varieties. But due to degradation of the ecosystem the wild varieties are being lost. And due to the promotion of monocultures with commercial, often imported seeds the local varieties are lost.

Not quite.

I have all your germplasm stored in
banks. I'm waiting for your s to be com-
pletely lost and then I'll sell these back to
you. That's why I'm changing patent
laws too - in anticipation of
that great day

Food security means
making sure patent
laws and R&D policies
reflect our needs not
only the needs of super-
profits of the MNCs.

Food security
means conserv-
ing our
biodiversity.

Food Security- A quick summary

- ♦ Self Reliance in food production was one of our major goals after independence.
- ♦ By the 1980s self-sufficiency was achieved and by the 1990s a huge surplus in grain production had accumulated. Though this production is not enough to meet the nutritional needs - it is more than what people are able to buy.
- ♦ But the rate of growth of agricultural production is inadequate and declining.
- ♦ Subsistence farmers, small farmers, tribals have increasing problems of food access and landless sections and artisans are also affected by changing cultural and economic factors.
- ♦ With globalisation there are new threats to our self-reliance and self sufficiency in food production. Emerging technologies backed by a new patent regime threaten this self reliance even more.



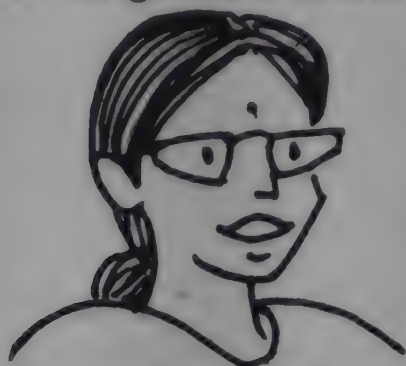
State Action Against Hunger

But
read on... its actually
about what it is undo-
ing also

of what the state has done
to combat hunger and what it
ought to have done

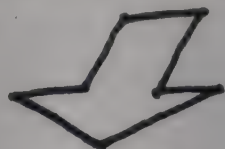
The Public Distribution System:

But does not the government react to this situation of widespread hunger and undernutrition.



The government did react to this situation and its approach to tackling such poverty related malnutrition was centred round the PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM.

PDS - The state's programmes for distribution of grains across the country has three essential components.



Procurement

The govt. fixes a price for the grain based on input costs and then buys up from the farmers a large part of their grain produce.



Storing and Distribution

These grains are stored in the Food Corporation of India godowns and are distributed through a network of ration shops (fair prices shops) licensed for this purpose by the government.



Ration Cards

Every family has a ration card by showing which they are entitled to a certain amount of grain, sugar and kerosene at reasonable prices.

Three major goals of this PDS set up were:

1. Ensure a fair prices to farmers
2. Ensure grain availability at all times in all areas and move stocks to places where drought or famine conditions were reported.
3. Ensure market prices of grain, sugar and kerosene did not rise up very high even in times of relative scarcity.

The actual achievements of PDS fell far short of these goals, but still it was a source of considerable relief to atleast a section of the poor whom it reached!

Well if you say so... In my place PDS bought from rich farmer and sold to the middle class...



Dismantling the Public Distribution System

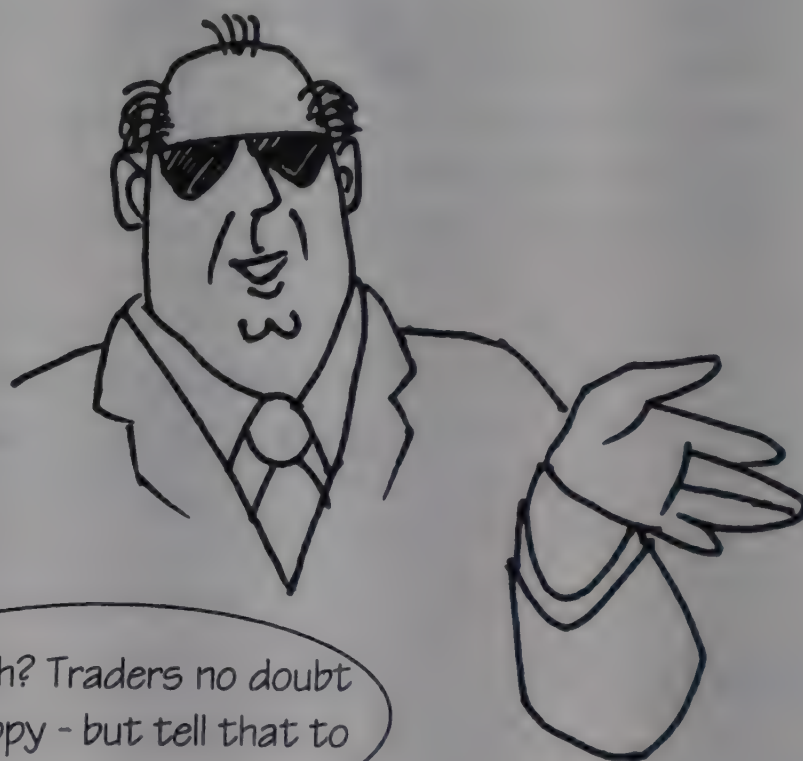
At least there was something the government was doing which was to some extent at least benefiting the people. Why then did they dismantle the PDS in the nineties?



Because there was pressure to reduce govt. expenditure - and food subsidies was one of the targets of such attack.

The Ideology of Neo-Liberalism

The market is the best mechanism to distribute. When people's needs are unfulfilled they buy more. That sends a signal to producers to produce more and to traders to bring more commodities, there. When the demand goes down, the market ensures that production and supply are reduced. And this market based regulation is done far more effectively than by any government control.

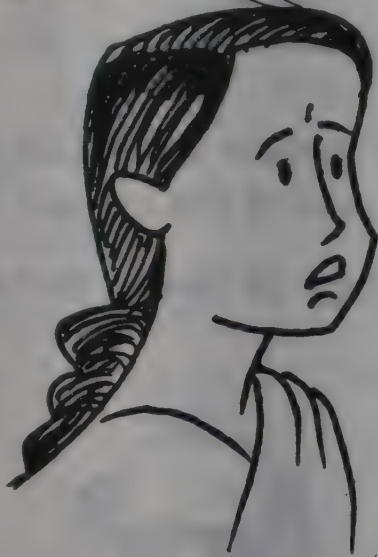


Oh yeah? Traders no doubt are happy - but tell that to the poor...

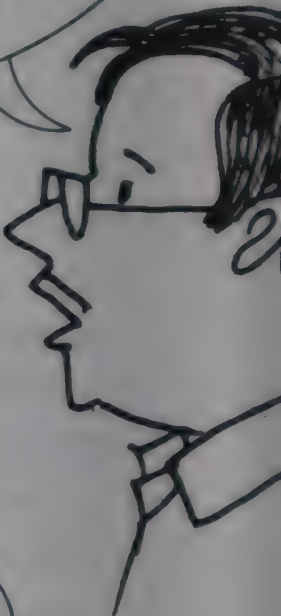


A number of studies had shown that a lot of the PDS grains do not reach the poor. Instead of using this to strengthen the PDS and ensuring its efficiency, it became an argument to dismantle it.

See! I told you so. Govt. regulation is inefficient.



But how are you so sure that market based regulation will reach the poor? For the market those who cannot buy do not count. The adivasis, the subsistence farmer, the slum dweller - and all those who have no purchasing power need not be worried about.




Ha, Ha!
We don't worry about that. Under market regulation we hope there will be no poor to reach!



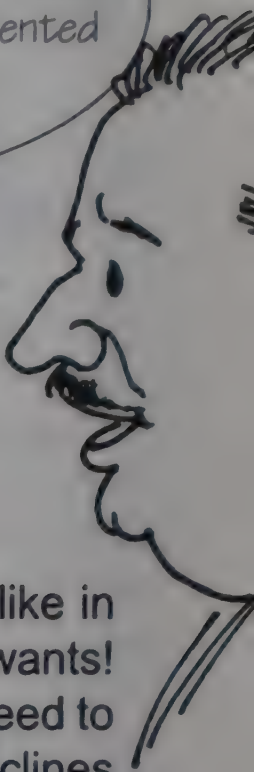
All poor people dead

In a market economy if you cannot buy you do not count. You're as good as dead...



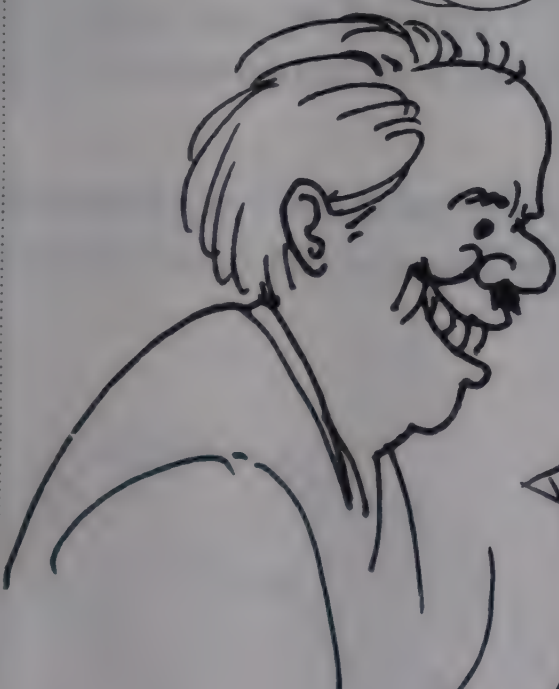


But
what about us
farmers being
guaranteed a
return?




We will import
grain from outside. Indian
farmers will be forced to shift from grain
to lucrative (and risky) export oriented
commercial crops and earn
foreign exchange.


This means we will get dependent on food imports like in the fifties and sixties. And this is what the western world wants! They have surplus grain and milk production that they need to sell - which they can do only if our production of these declines further. And all our farmers who now grow grain have to change to crops for western markets. Our rich farmers are tempted...



But will they let me export
and make a good profit?



Initially yes.
But after you become dependent on
them for markets, the prices will crash. But
you will then have no choice and will have to
export more for less and less gains - like
has happened in coffee, cocoa, tea,
aquaculture products
and so on

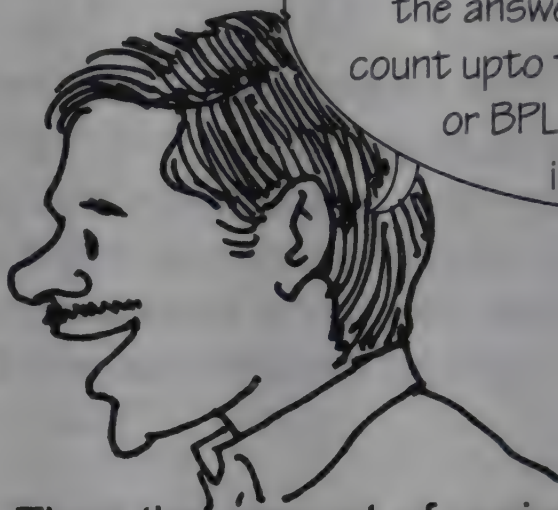
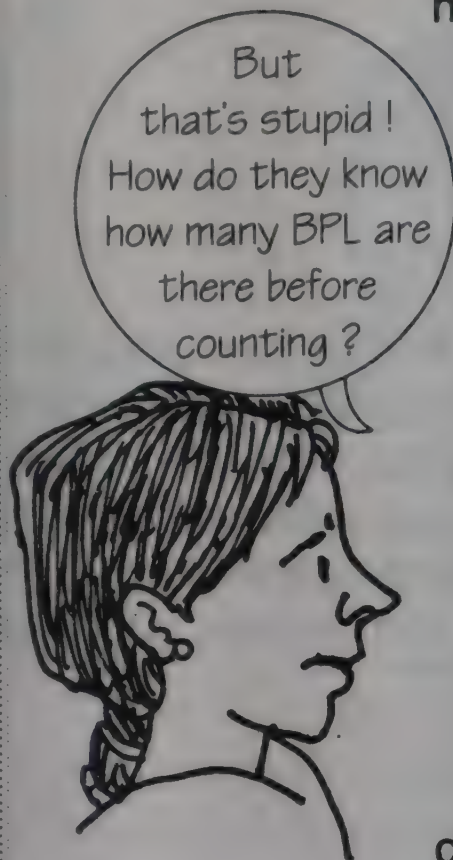


Come be my guest, dear rich
Indian farmer!

The PDS Dismantling Process

The Dismantling of the PDS was done in stages! So that no one notices!

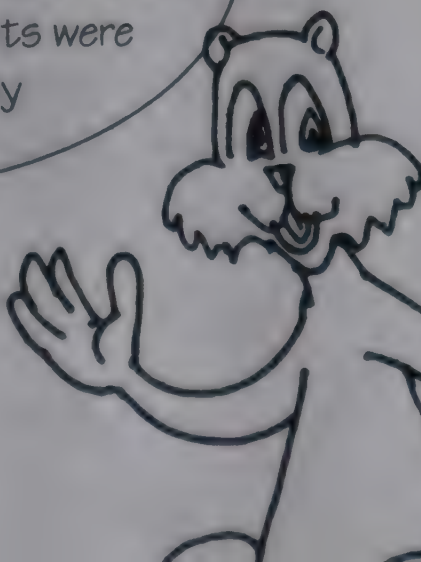
- ♦ Firstly there was 'targeting.' The PDS was to be limited to only the poor - or so they said. This was done by categorising the consumers into two groups - Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL). The identification of BPL is pre-determined - a quota is given for each place - the officers cannot report more poor people than this quota!



- ♦ Then the amount of grains per head was reduced- by changing allocations from per head allocations to per family allocations. Currently food allocation is 20 kg per family per month, which works out to only about 4 kg per head even for the small family of five (as against a requirement of 11.25 kg / month.)

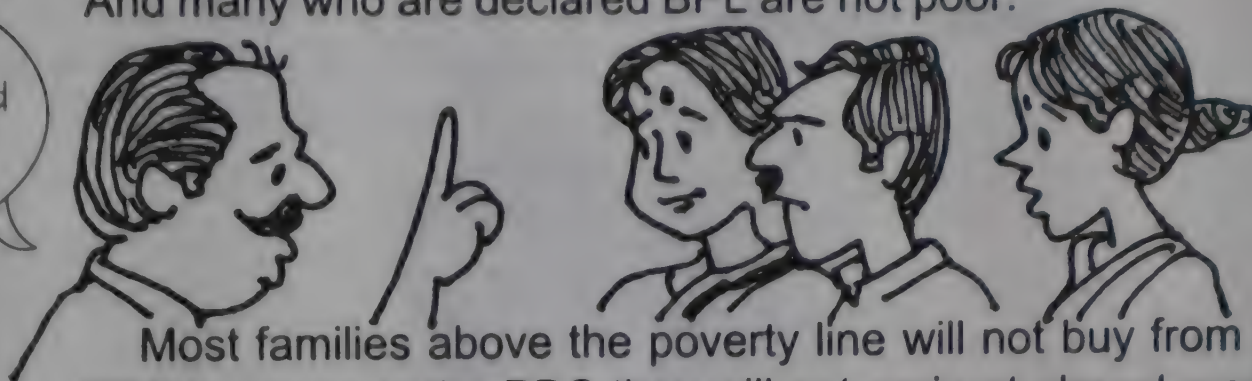
- ♦ Finally the cost of grains supplied was increased so that there is less and less difference between the open market price and the PDS price.

To start with, even the existing PDS was administered inefficiently - so that people who needed it most did not get it anyway and there were a lot of leakages. So when dismantling began, the protests were not as loud as they may otherwise have been.



And not just that, the BPL identification is also arbitrary - often depending on the whims and fancies of the local authority. This becomes a good excuse for the politically powerful and the vested interests to use it to extend patronage. As a result, many households below poverty line never become BPL. And many who are declared BPL are not poor.

I am the sarpanch. Those who campaigned for me get to be on the BPL list!



Most families above the poverty line will not buy from the PDS because in the PDS they will get grain at almost market price but at poor quality. APL prices are meant to reflect cost of storage & put at Rs. 900 per quintal for wheat and Rs 1180 per quintal for rice. This is almost the price at which it is available on the market.

Prices for BPL are kept at half of this or even higher which are too high for the really poor and therefore they too cannot benefit from it.

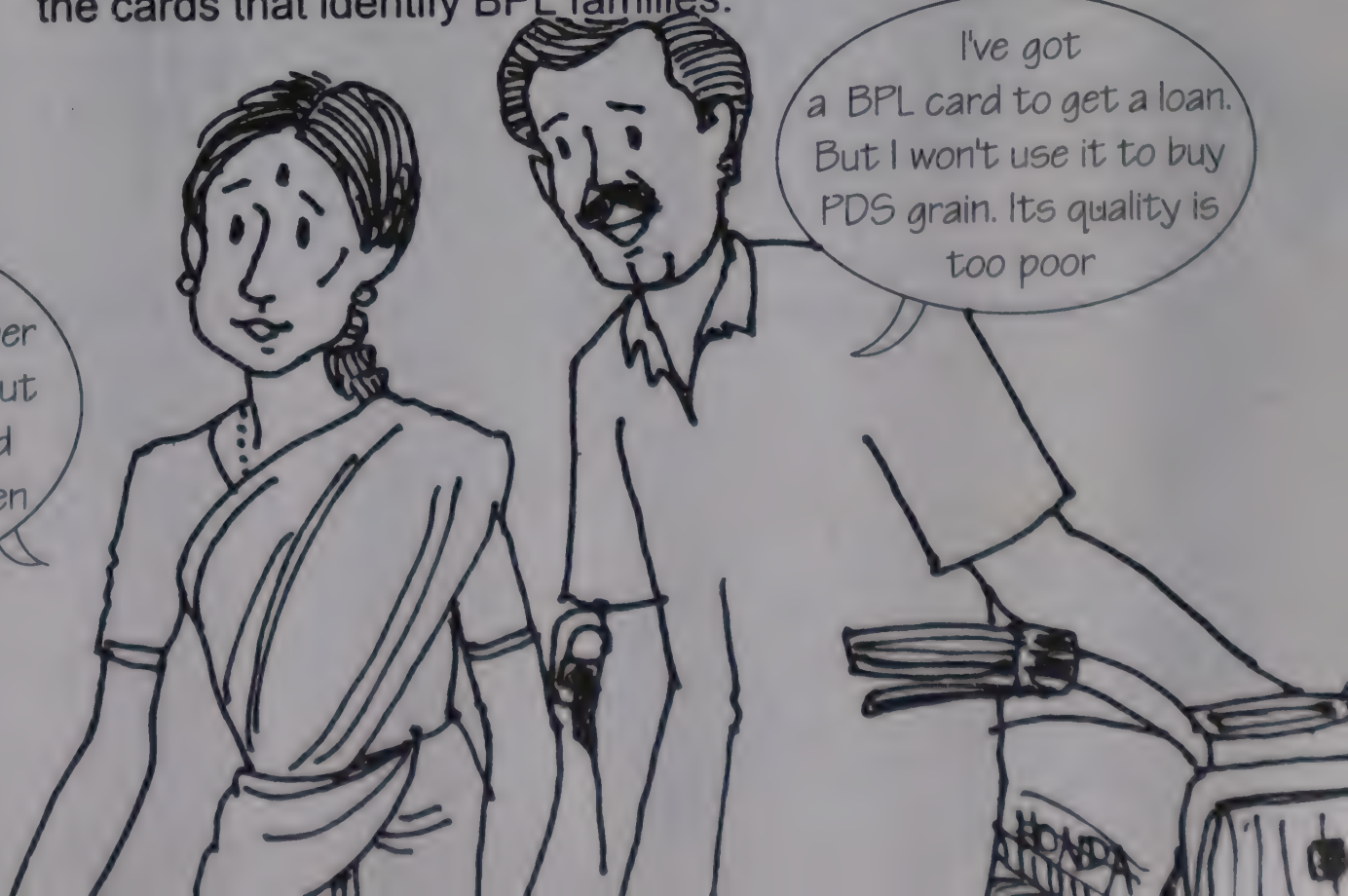
Net result the food grains stock soars as the poor are increasingly having to do with less and less food.

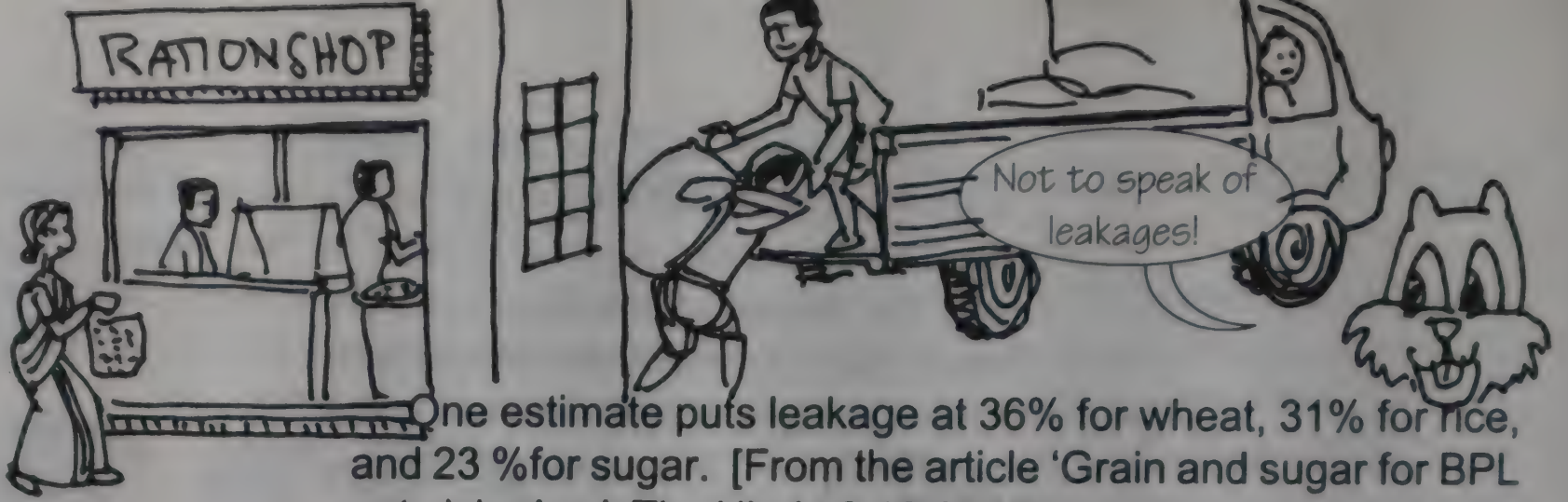
Less than half the food grains allotted to states for TDPS programme were lifted by them ie 10.85 kg/head of rice as against the allotted 25 kg.

CAG report for the year 2000: Out of 31 states, surveys to identify BPL families were not done in 18 states, and of the 13 where it is done many have not issued blue cards. Which are the cards that identify BPL families.

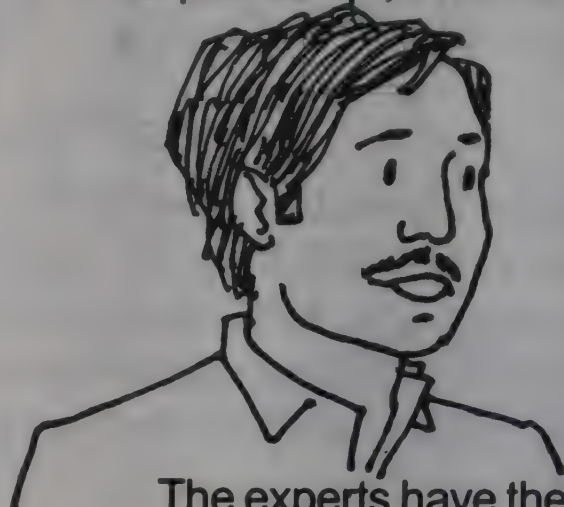
BPL families in our area get 25 kg of rice per month at Rs.5 per kg but many have mortgaged their cards or can't even afford this.

I've got a BPL card to get a loan. But I won't use it to buy PDS grain. Its quality is too poor





One estimate puts leakage at 36% for wheat, 31% for rice, and 23 %for sugar. [From the article 'Grain and sugar for BPL not picked up', The Hindu 8.10.2000]



But isn't the government embarrassed by this? Aren't the economists who recommend these policies ashamed by this increasing food stocks in the midst of poverty?

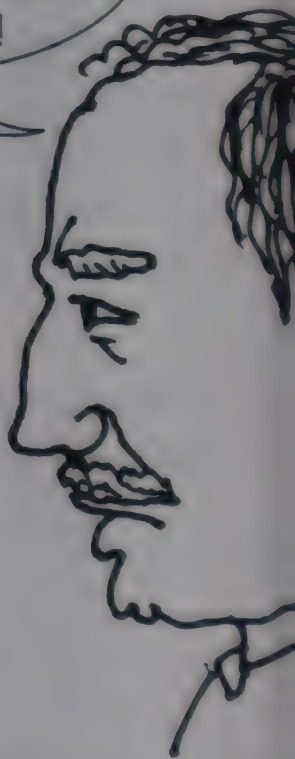
The experts have their explanation: "The people already have enough grain - so now they are buying other food stuffs !"

If they have no bread let them eat cake.



Marie Antionette circa 1780

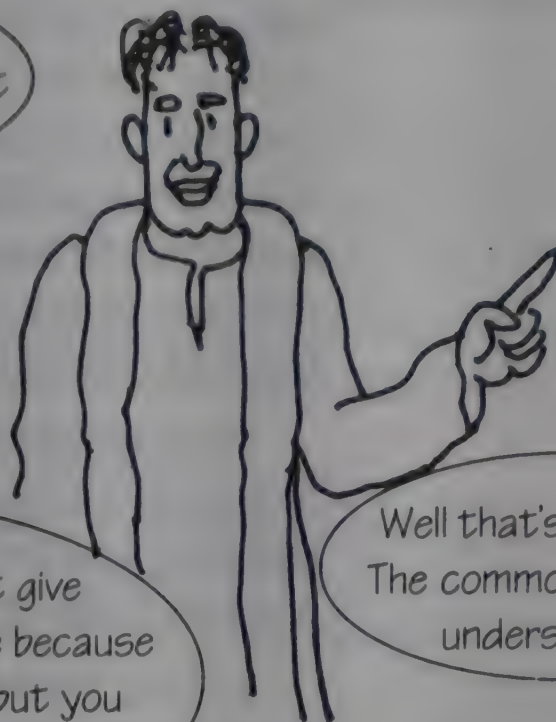
Oh!
They are not buying bread because they ARE eating cake!



Our honourable Minister circa 2001

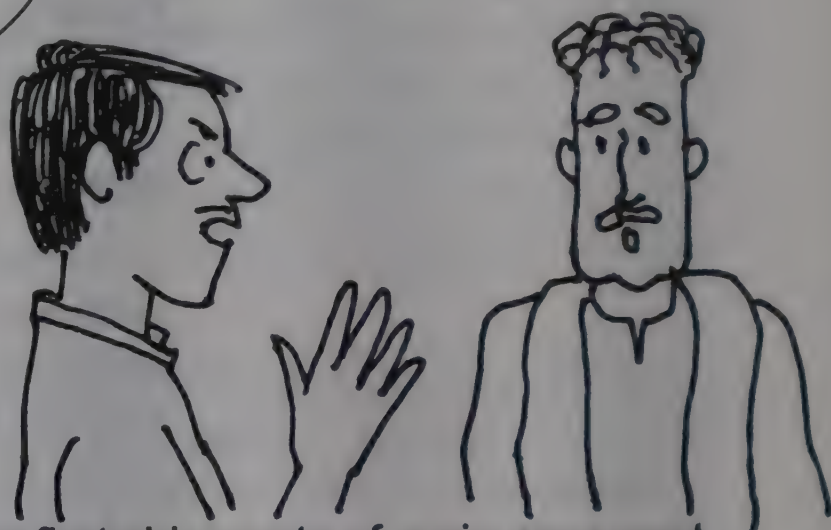
And they also have a new solution...

Let us export the grain! And to make it competitive let us export it at the cost fixed for BPL.



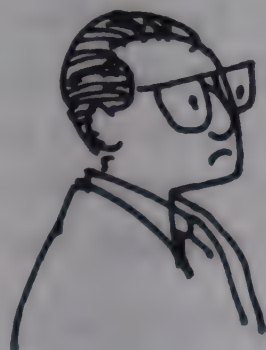
Wait a minute!
You are saying you cannot give subsidized prices to our people because that's against your policy - but you want to export it at subsidized prices ??? I just don't get it!

Well that's economics!
The common man won't understand it!



But there is a snag - The first shipments of grain were sent back for poor quality!! So there is another solution coming up.

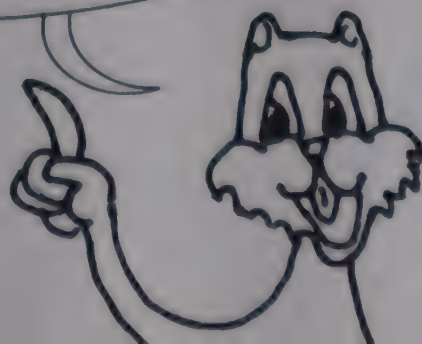
Hey! Let's stop procurement!



And let's see how you win the next election!



In a poor country the choice is not between no to PDS or yes to PDS. It is only for a better PDS. How to make it work!



STATE ACTION NEEDED ON PDS:

The whole PDS as it exists today is designed to fail. Given the inadequacy of official commissions, only those who have enough clout to resist public scrutiny and sell on the black market are likely to bid for ration-shop licences. And once corrupt dealers are in control of the licences, the door is wide open for large-scale diversion of PDS grain to the black market. According to one dealer, who spoke relatively openly, barely 25 per cent of the food lifted from FCI godowns in the district of Surguja reaches the intended households.

The experience to date suggests that the public distribution system is in urgent need of drastic reform, with a special focus on public accountability. Action is needed in each state to press for the following changes:

- ♦ First, better use can be made of both carrot and stick in handling the ration-shop dealers. Their commissions should be raised, making it possible for them to work honestly, and conditional on that, firm action should be taken against corrupt dealers.

- ♦ Second, gram panchayats and gram sabhas should be empowered to appoint and dismiss ration-shop operators. In Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh, the devolution of supervisory powers to panchayati raj institutions has been used with good effect in other contexts, and this approach can perhaps be extended to the public distribution system.

- ♦ Third, there is a strong case for abolishing the distinction between BPL ("below poverty line") and non-BPL households. Aside from creating artificial social divisions in the villages, this distinction has undermined public pressure for an improved PDS (since non-BPL households no longer have a stake in it), without achieving much in terms of cutting costs. Also it is impossible to identify the BPL house in any honest manner and provide special rations to them alone given the existing administrative apparatus and its nexus with the rural rich.

- ♦ Last but not least, there is need for greater attention and vigilance from popular organizations and social movements at the village level. There is little hope of radical change based on government initiatives alone.

Other State Action Needed:

The November 28th Supreme Court in an interim Ruling clearly lays down the immediate measures needed - the complete implementation of nine crucial nationwide programmes:

1. Targetted Public Distribution System: All below poverty line card holders(BPL) must get 25 kg of grain per month at no higher than a subsidised price fixed by the state government.

2. Antyodaya Anna Yojana-AAY: All Antyodaya Anna Yojana Cardholders must get 25 kg of grain each month at Rs 2 per kg for wheat and Rs 3 /kg for rice.

3. Food for Work: Every person needing work in famine / drought/scarcity affected areas must be given work in accordance with the terms of the states famine/relief/scarcity code

4. Employment Assurance Scheme(EAS): atleast two able bodied adults per family regardless of APL/BPL status who need work must be given atleast hundred days of employment each, per year during the lean agricultural season. This scheme has now been merged under the Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana,

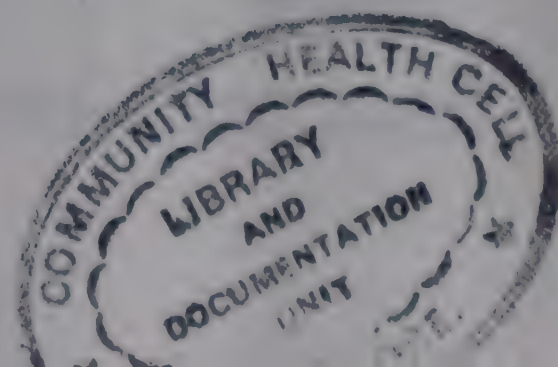
5. Mid day Meal Scheme: All children regularly attending government and govt assisted primary schools must be provided hot, cooked, midday meals for atleast 200 days in a year.

6. National Maternity Benefit Scheme: NMBS :Every pregnant BPL woman must be given rupees 500 for the first two births, 8 to 10 weeks prior to delivery

7. National Old Age Pension: NOAP All destitute persons 65 years and over, must receive Rs 75 per month in addition to entitlements under the state pension scheme

8. Annapurna Scheme: All destitute persons 65 years and over eligible for central pensions(NOAP) but not receiving it must be given ten kgs of free foodgrain per month.

9. National Family Benefit Scheme(NFPS): Every BPL family must get Rs10,000 cash on the death of the primary breadwinner.



Supreme Court "interim order" passed on 28 November. The order has three significant components:

(1) it converts the benefits of eight nutrition-related schemes (PDS, Antyodaya, mid-day meals, ICDS, Annapurna, old-age pensions, NMBS and NFBS) into legal entitlements;

(2) it directs all state governments to begin cooked mid-day meals for all children in government and government-assisted schools;

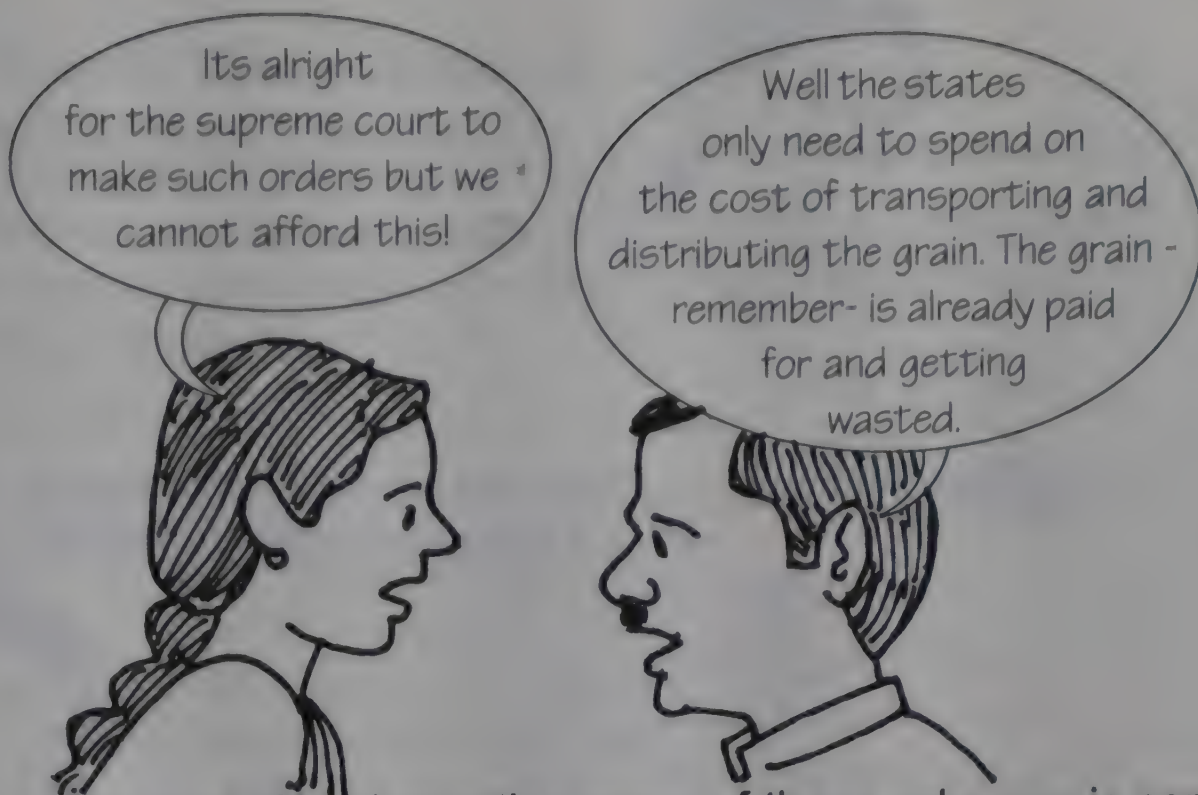
(3) it directs the state and central governments to adopt specific measures to ensure public awareness and transparency of these programmes.

The Supreme Court order gives a time frame for the implementation of each programme. Further it asks for the order to be translated and posted in all concerned govt offices and fair price shops and panchayat offices.

This Supreme Court order came as a result of a public Interest litigation filled by NGOs-notably the PUCL!



Can we afford these schemes?



The cost of implementing many of these schemes is comparable to the cost of holding the grains in the godowns. Cost of holding a tonne of food Rs 1000/year.

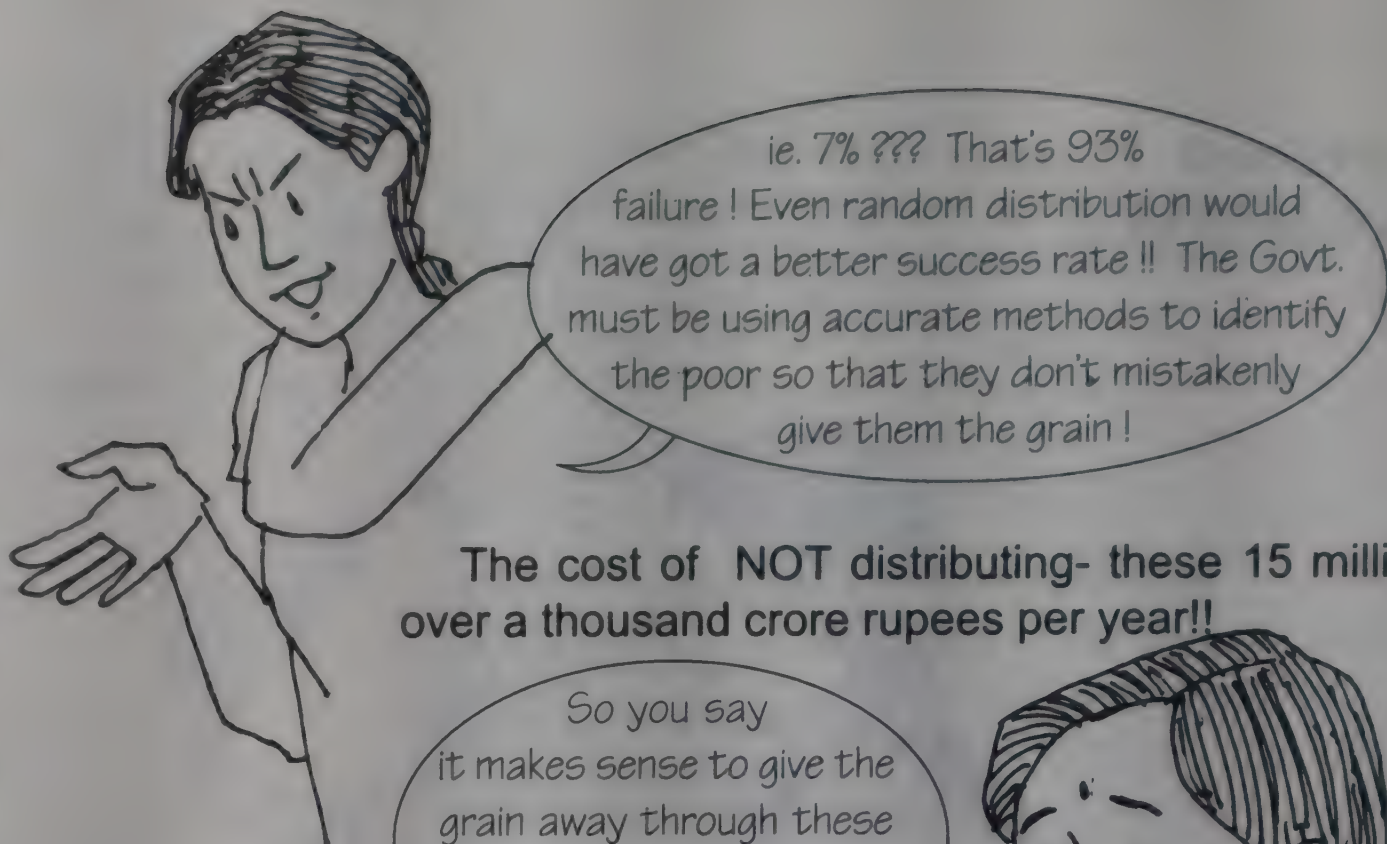
Total food subsidy for 2000-1 was 12,215 crores of which cost of holding food alone is about 6000 crores!!

What about the government schemes announced so far - they are too little and too poorly implemented One of the clearest examples is the Antyodaya Anna scheme announced with so much fanfare.



In the Antyodaya Anna scheme 25 kg of rice at Rs 2 for wheat and Rs 3 /kg for rice were to be given to the 5 crore poorest.

Even if they had fully implemented this scheme only a small part of the grain stock would have been utilised. About 10 to 15 million tonnes only. As it is, even by government estimate, only 7.09% of the intended beneficiaries got the grain. The process of identifying 'the poorest' and reaching the grains just to them is quite a job - even if a sincere attempt had been made...



ie. 7% ??? That's 93% failure ! Even random distribution would have got a better success rate !! The Govt. must be using accurate methods to identify the poor so that they don't mistakenly give them the grain !

The cost of NOT distributing- these 15 million tonnes is over a thousand crore rupees per year!!

So you say it makes sense to give the grain away through these schemes as it is cheaper than storing the grain!



Nor are these schemes justified only as a way of getting rid of the grains. Many of these schemes have many other compulsions also. If we add the benefits of these nine schemes to the storage costs saved then certainly we can afford them. Indeed we need them.

Get what the order means... Each of these nine schemes is now an entitlement of the poor.

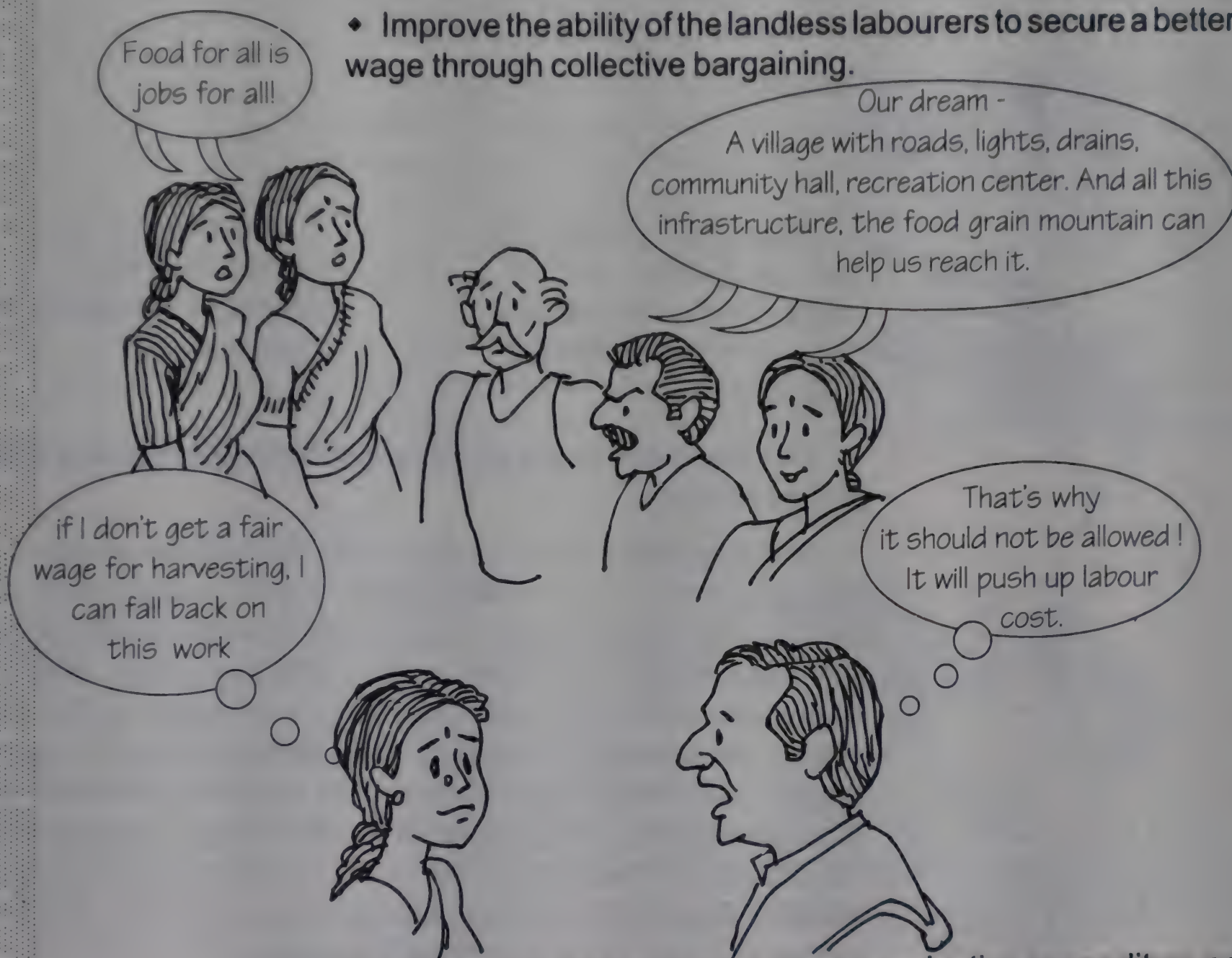


Let us examine the merits of three more of these nine schemes - the food for work scheme, the mid-day meal scheme and the ICDS programme.

Food For Work Schemes

Food for work schemes can be used to:

- ♦ Provide employment in rural areas and drought prone areas
- ♦ Build up community assets - repair of tanks, building schools, health centres, roads - the entire infrastructure needed to improve the quality of life.
- ♦ Ensure minimum wages for the poor.
- ♦ Improve the ability of the landless labourers to secure a better wage through collective bargaining.



Food for work schemes are not non-productive expenditure as neo-liberal economists would have us believe.

If we use "already expended" money (which the food grain mountain represents) to generate more wages for the rural poor, then the people can start affording more clothes, more food products, better houses and this will lead to a revival for industry!!

Mid-day School Meals Programme



Provides nutrition & health. Children are most vulnerable to malnutrition & suffer long-term effects as it stunts their growth.

Boosts school attendance, and enhances learning abilities.



Promotes social equity as children who attend Govt. schools are mainly from disadvantaged families.

Helps break the caste barrier by requiring all children to sit together and share a meal.

The Supreme Court directions relating to mid-day meals are as follows:

"We direct the state governments/UTs to implement the mid-day meal scheme by providing every child in every government and government-assisted primary school with a prepared mid-day meal with a minimum content of 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein each day of school for a minimum of 200 days. Those governments providing dry rations instead of cooked meals must within three months start providing cooked meals in all government and government-aided primary schools in half the districts of the state (in order of poverty) and must within a further period of three months extend the provision of cooked meals to the remaining parts of the states.

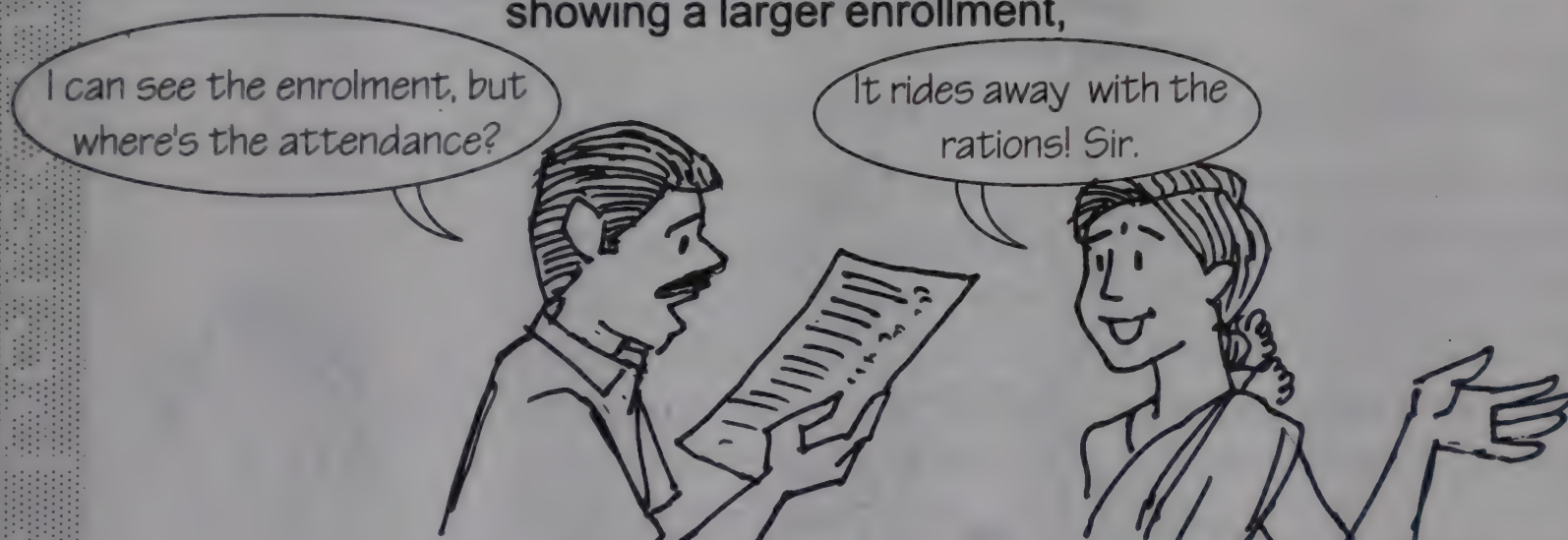
We direct the Union of India and the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to ensure provision of fair average quality grain for the scheme on time. The states/UTs and the FCI are directed to do joint inspection of food grains. If the food grain is found, on joint inspection, not to be of fair average quality, it will be replaced by the FCI prior to lifting."

Current scenario in midday school meal programme:

In August 1995, the central government introduced the "National Program of Nutritional Support for Primary Education" {Mid - Day Meals Scheme}. Under this program, the central government provides food grain free of cost to state governments for implementing mid-day meal schemes. The guidelines require state governments to introduce cooked meals within two years [that is by mid-1997]. Meanwhile, state governments were allowed to distribute the grain in the form of monthly "dry rations" to school children.

Today, most state governments are still distributing the food in the form of monthly "dry rations" [usually 3 Kgs per child per month]. Only a few states have introduced cooked mid-day meals, eg. Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Haryana. Some states [eg. Madhya Pradesh] have introduced cooked meals in tribal areas but not other areas.

Field surveys indicate that there are many problems with the "dry rations" programs: Untimely distribution of grains, poor quality, low quantity, it does not reach the children, pilferage by showing a larger enrollment,



It is important to ensure that introducing mid-day meal programs also means that adequate provisions are made for the following:

[1]. Adequate infrastructure is provided for hygienic preparation of meals and storage of materials.

[II]. Staff is provided for cooking and other work, so that the teachers do not have to spend their time in this process.

[III]. Adequate financial provisions are made for a smooth implementation of the program.

[IV]. Transport facilities are arranged without cost to the community.

In most states all this has not happened.

School meals as children's rights

The perception of mid day school meals:

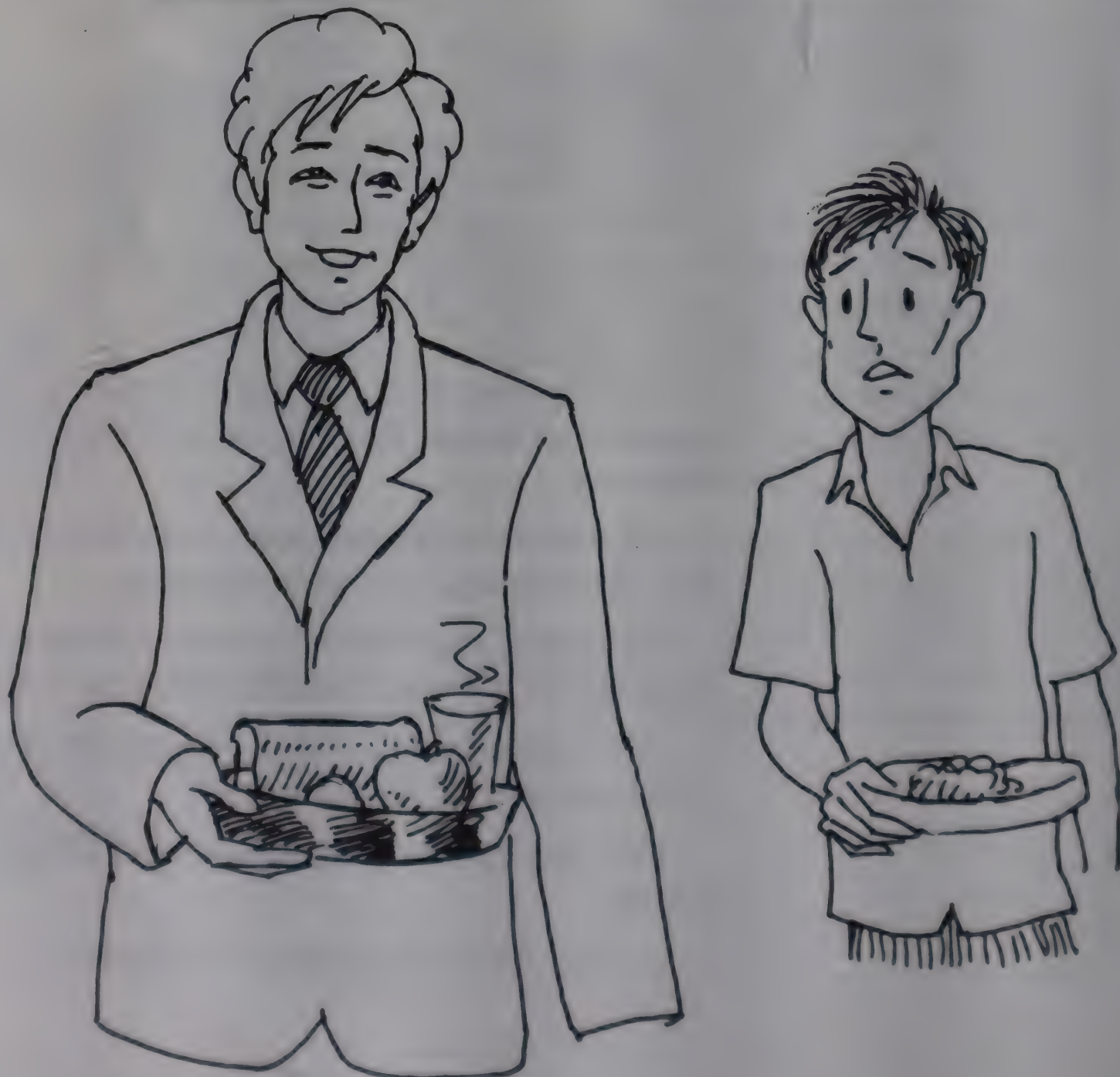
Oh this is a dole for the poor. We may ask for it but basically it is something to be ashamed of.



Reality: Most developed countries have elaborate arrangements for midday school meals. There are special efforts to make it *not only nutritive but delicious*. There is often a payment at subsidised rates, but even then *for poor students the school meal is free-and the school is reimbursed by the government*.

Provision of school meals is seen as an essential and basic component of most school education programmes world wide.

Look at this notice for school meals from a government school in the US:



**AN USA SCHOOL MEALS INFORMATION SHEET:
BITEABLE, CHEF SALAD LUNCH, AND A LA CARTE
ITEMS AVAILABLE**

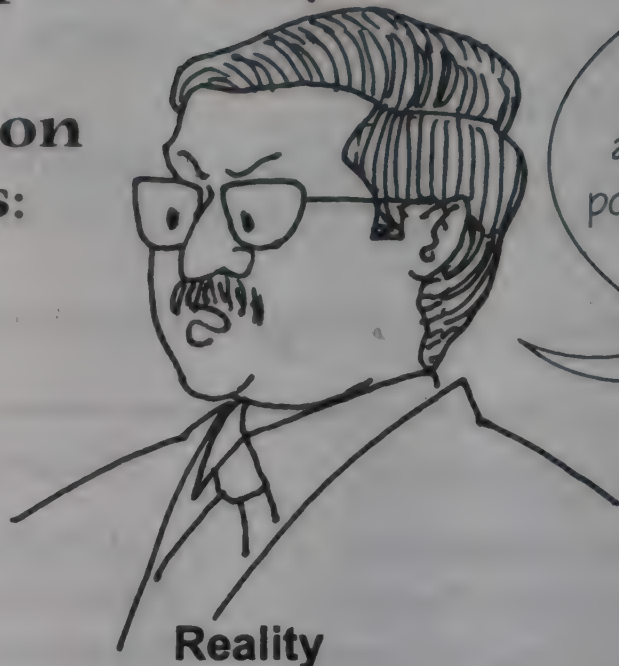
DAILY SCHOOL MEALS ARE PLANNED BY REGISTERED DIETITIANS AND REFLECT OUR GOAL TO LOWER FAT, SODIUM & SUGAR.

PERCENTAGE OF CALORIES FROM FAT AVERAGED FEBRUARY 1 - 8 IS 28.1%.

<p>Monday, February 4</p> <p>Chicken Tenders w/ Blueberry Muffin Turkey Corn Dog Bites Whipped Potatoes w/Gravy, Orange Quarters Dried Cherries, Applesauce Chef's Salad Choice of Milk</p>	<p>Thursday, February 7</p> <p>Chicken Fillet on Bun Beef & Bean Burrito, Southwestern Rice Mixed Vegetables, Fresh Apple Chilled Pineapple, Fruit Cocktail Chef's Salad Choice of Milk</p>
<p>Tuesday, February 5</p> <p>Hamburger or Cheeseburger on Bun Fish Fillet on Bun Smiley Potatoes, Lettuce/Tomato/ Pickle Chilled Peaches w/ Plum, Fruit Juice Taco Salad Choice of Milk</p>	<p>Friday, February 8</p> <p>Cheese or Pepperoni Bagel Pizza Broccoli/Baby Carrots/Cauliflower w/Dip Frozen Strawberry Yogurt, Chilled Pears w/Plum Chef's Salad Choice of Milk</p>
<p>Wednesday, February 6</p> <p>Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce w/Breadstick Hot Ham & Cheese on Croissant Green Beans, Tossed Salad Raisins (2), Apricot Applesauce Chef's Salad Choice of Milk</p>	<p>PERCENTAGE OF CALORIES FROM FAT AVERAGED FEBRUARY 11 - 15 IS 25.2%.</p>

Who pays for the government nutrition programmes:

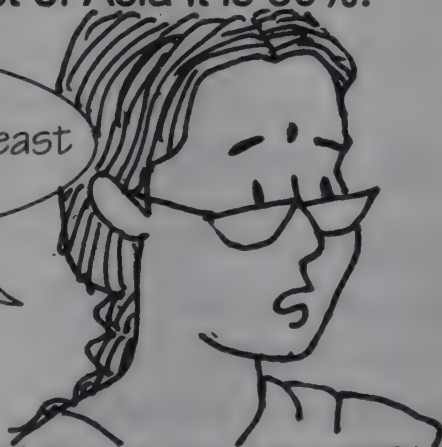
Perception:



That's all nice to see! Rich countries can afford it. Here we have fewer taxpayers and they cannot be taxed to support the poor. The rich pay taxes - they should decide how it should be spent. They cannot be forced to subsidize the poor.

Ratio of Central Govt Tax Receipts to the GDP fell from 11.3% in 1990 to 8.8% in 2000. Including State Taxes, the ratio of the Total Tax Collected to GDP fell from 17 % in 1990 to 14% in 2000. In most developed countries this ratio is 40% and in most of Asia it is 30%.

Meaning
- Indian Rich are one of the least taxed in the world!



Of the central tax 70% is from indirect taxes. And for states indirect taxes amount to 95% of the tax collected. Of the total taxes collected, 82% comes from indirect taxes. Direct taxes - are paid by rich. Indirect are paid by rich and poor

There is no differential taxing when it comes to indirect taxes - rich or poor, you pay the same amount. A small part of the indirect tax comes from luxury items which only the rich use. But the bulk of the taxes come from mass consumption items - soap, food, cooking fuel etc. - mostly from the poor since they are more in number !

The Indian rich is not subsidizing the poor. It is the poor in India who subsidize the rich.



Earlier there was a differential taxing - luxury items being taxed more and mass consumption items being taxed less. But now in the name of tax rationalisation all items have 16% tax - which means a lesser tax on luxury goods and more tax than before on mass consumption items.

Lesson



My dear Watson,
the case is very clear. Most taxes in
India are paid by the poor. What
better and more just way to spend it
than to provide them with enough
food.

STATE ACTION FOR MID-DAY SCHOOL MEALS:

- a) Ensure the complete universal implementation of mid-day meal scheme in every government school or government assisted elementary school. And mid-day meals must imply cooked meals of adequate nutrition and quality.
- b) Improvement in infrastructure and staff adequate for this task.
- c) Ensure leadership of elected panchayats and participation through local communities to prevent leakages and ensure transparency.



Pre school child nutrition programmes:

Most developed societies have comprehensive programmes for the pre-school child. The basic components of these are a day care center and nutrition supplementation programme.

This day care facility is essential :

- ♦ For the healthy development of the child, especially when the working mother cannot spend adequate time during working hours.
- ♦ For enabling the mother to continue working.
- ♦ For providing nutrition supplementation to children from poor families who need it.

India has such a programme called The Integrated Child Development Programme (ICDS).

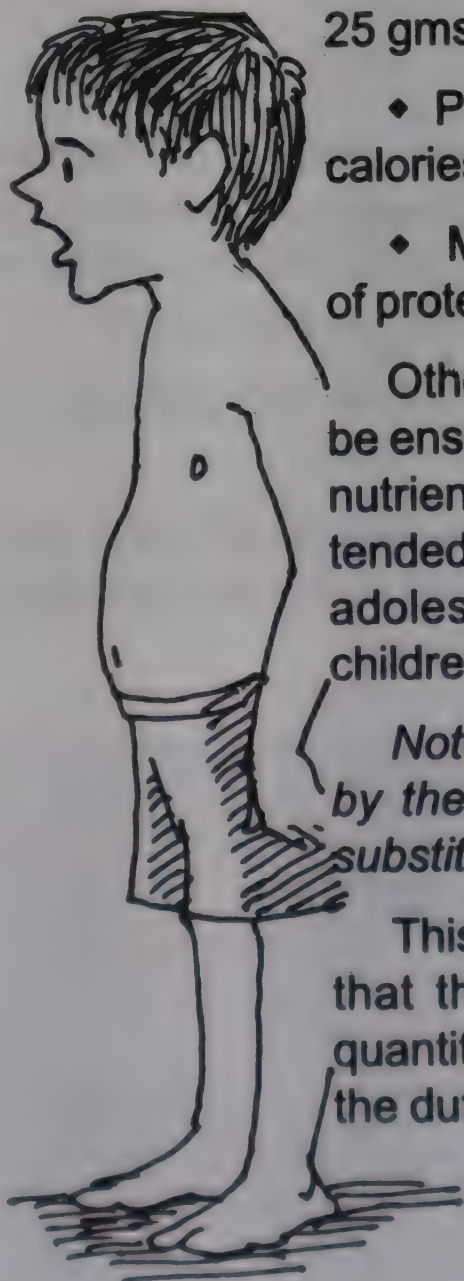
It is the right of EVERY

- ♦ Child upto six years of age to get 300 calories and 8 to 10 gms of protein per day
- ♦ Adolescent girl to get 500 calories supplement and 20 to 25 gms of protein per day
- ♦ Pregnant woman and each nursing mother to get 500 calories and 20 to 25 gms of protein per day.
- ♦ Malnourished child to get 600 calories and 16 to 20 gms of protein per day.

Other than the above, every child upto six years must also be ensured immunisation, health check ups, referral services, nutrient and health education and the same needs to be extended to reach every pregnant woman and nursing mothers, adolescent girls with special emphasis for malnourished children.

Note - that the above calories are supplements - to be given by the state over and above their existing diet. And not a substitute for the same.

This scheme represents a social consensus that accepts that the poor are getting less than the minimum desired quantities of food, AND that it is their right to get more AND it is the duty of the state to so provide it.



The current scenario of ICDS programmes

"There are approximately 100 million children in the 0-6 age group. Of this approximately 60 million are underweight and malnourished. But the ICDS programme covers only 22 million - even on paper"

In most ICDS programmes the food supplementation is neither adequate, nor regular, nor of sufficient quality. But in states where the outreach especially to the preschool child is relatively better like in Kerala and Tamilnadu the impact of this can be seen in a wide variety of programmes and social indicators.

What is urgently needed is to build upon transform the ICDS programme:

What needs to be done...

- ♦ The integrated child development service (ICDS)- otherwise known as the anganwadi and balwadi programme must be universalised in coverage.

- ♦ Basic facilities and infrastructure of these centres must be upgraded to a minimum prescribed quality.

- ♦ The centres must be located and function in place and time convenient for local families and must be fixed in consultation with them.

- ♦ The out reach programmes to under three must be redesigned so that the programme reaches out to them.

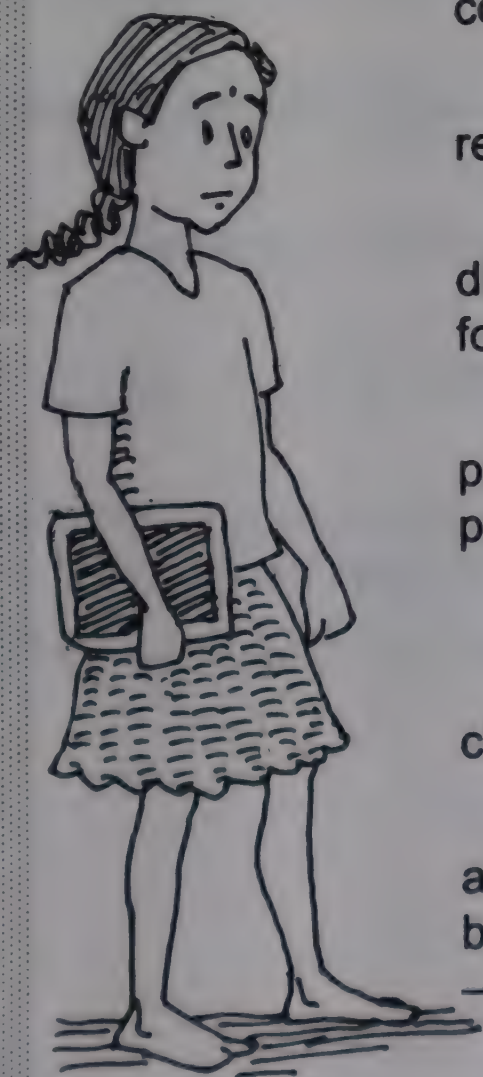
- ♦ Revise the nutrition programme - both type of food and distribution system. Increase quantity of food and ensure that food supplied fulfils minimum quality.- tasty!

- ♦ Improve the child health component of the ICDS programme as well as health education and nutrition education programmes directed to families of children at risk

- ♦ Revamp status, and training of anganwadi workers

- ♦ Increase emphasis on neglected dimension — early childhood education. Make such education enjoyable

- ♦ Build in participation of panchayats, NGOs in programme and flexibility in management. If all this has to happen the budgetary allocation will need to go up - to at least 1% of GDP —about Rs15 per child per day



A Quick Summary:

* The PDS is the main form of state action to combat hunger and malnutrition. But the PDS is being dismantled.

* The Supreme Court has intervened with an interim order to use the mountain of food grains in government stocks to implement nine programmes aimed at combating hunger and malnutrition.

* The Supreme order in effect turns these programmes in to entitlements of the people.

* Of these programmes the food-for-work programme can be of major benefit not only to combat hunger but also to build up our rural infrastructure, promote equity and revive industry.

* The Mid day School meal programme and the ICDS programme are essential programmes for the child nutrition, health and for its education, and must be seen as their basic right.

STATE ACTION IS NEEDED FOR

- ♦ Improving and universalising the public distribution system
- ♦ Implementing the Supreme Court Order on the nine programmes
- ♦ Improving and Universalising ICDS coverage to reach out to the pre school child.
- ♦ Addressing Child malnutrition through Special Programmes.
- ♦ Supporting and Encouraging Community initiatives & peoples action against hunger. (See next section for this.)
- ♦ Improving livelihoods of the poor through its economic policies and its special schemes.

**What is
needed is:**

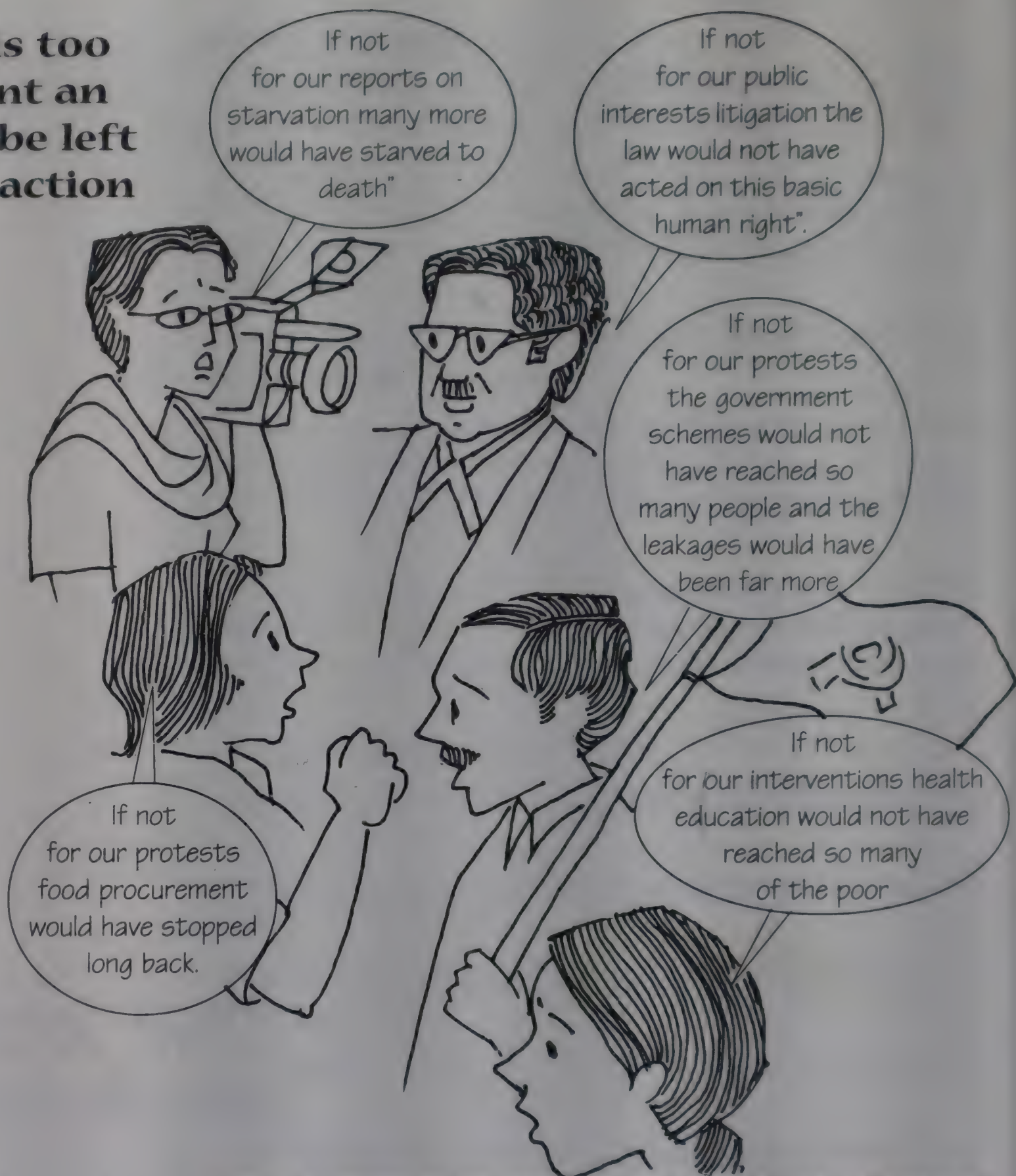
Civil Society and People's Action on Hunger

Act Locally.

Act Globally



Hunger is too important an issue to be left to state action alone.



Yes, all sections of the people need to mobilise for this most fundamental of issues. And the battle must be carried into and affect the functioning of all the institutions of civil society if change has to result.

We have acted -but there is a lot more to be done.

So what do we suggest:

Local Action:

- ♦ To ensure that the deprived have better access to their entitlements.
- ♦ To involve those who are suffering from hunger and malnutrition in the process of change.
- ♦ To assist those who are suffering from hunger and malnutrition to cope better and provide some immediate relief.

Regional (State-level) Action & National Action

To build public awareness on the dimensions of the problem

To build public awareness on the need and the possibilities for change.

National Action & Global Action:

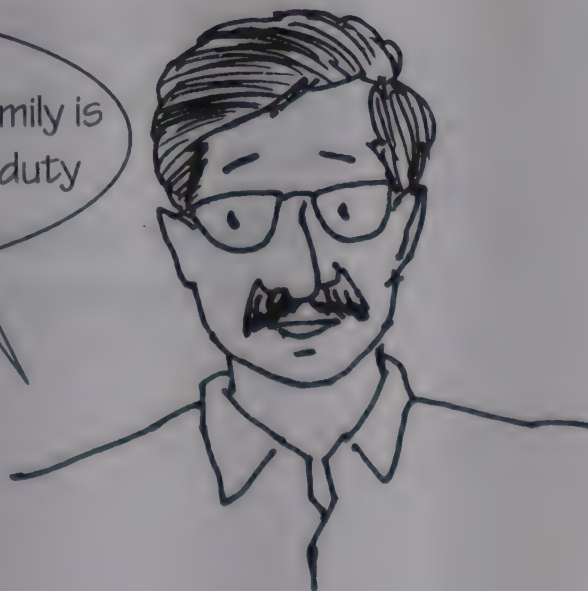
To resist adverse policies that threaten the food security of our people

To build public awareness and optimism that 'Another World is Possible'

So what do we suggest:

The basic principle underlying all peoples actions: Recognise the essential nature of right to food as right to life - the most basic of all fundamental rights:

And this means
that whenever any individual or family is
unable to buy food the state is duty
bound to provide the food.



Local Action:
What needs to be done at community level for implementing government schemes

MONITOR

- ♦ Need to monitor poverty alleviation programmes—preventing leakages; ensuring that those who need it most get to it and so on..
- ♦ Need to monitor existing PDS- are beneficiaries identified as per norms is food allocation reaching them....
- ♦ Need to monitor mid day school meal and preschool child programmes - so as to prevent leakages and ensure full utilisation
- ♦ Need to monitor child and women health programmes

FACILITATE

Need to facilitate these government programmes

- ♦ Help the employees on the job, - especilly the anganvadi worker, the ANM and the school teacher
- ♦ organise community support mechanisms,
- ♦ let people know their entitlements,

ADVOCACY

Need to build public opinion for policy changes

1. universal public distribution system - not targeted system
2. Better design of preschool child care programmes;
3. Better outreach and delivery of healthcare devices - immunisation, control of communicable disease, diarrhoea, respiratory infection management, better care in pregnancy and so on.

Better food for work schemes

4. Greater role for panchayats with safeguards to prevent misuse
5. More transparency and accountability in the manner of scheme implementation.

Local Action Addressing child malnutri- tion :

Child malnutrition is too important to be left to the government alone. Besides its our children that are being affected- and we must help at once as far as possible. Besides it is some action that we can take at once.

Addressing child malnutrition in the 0 to 5 age group requires:

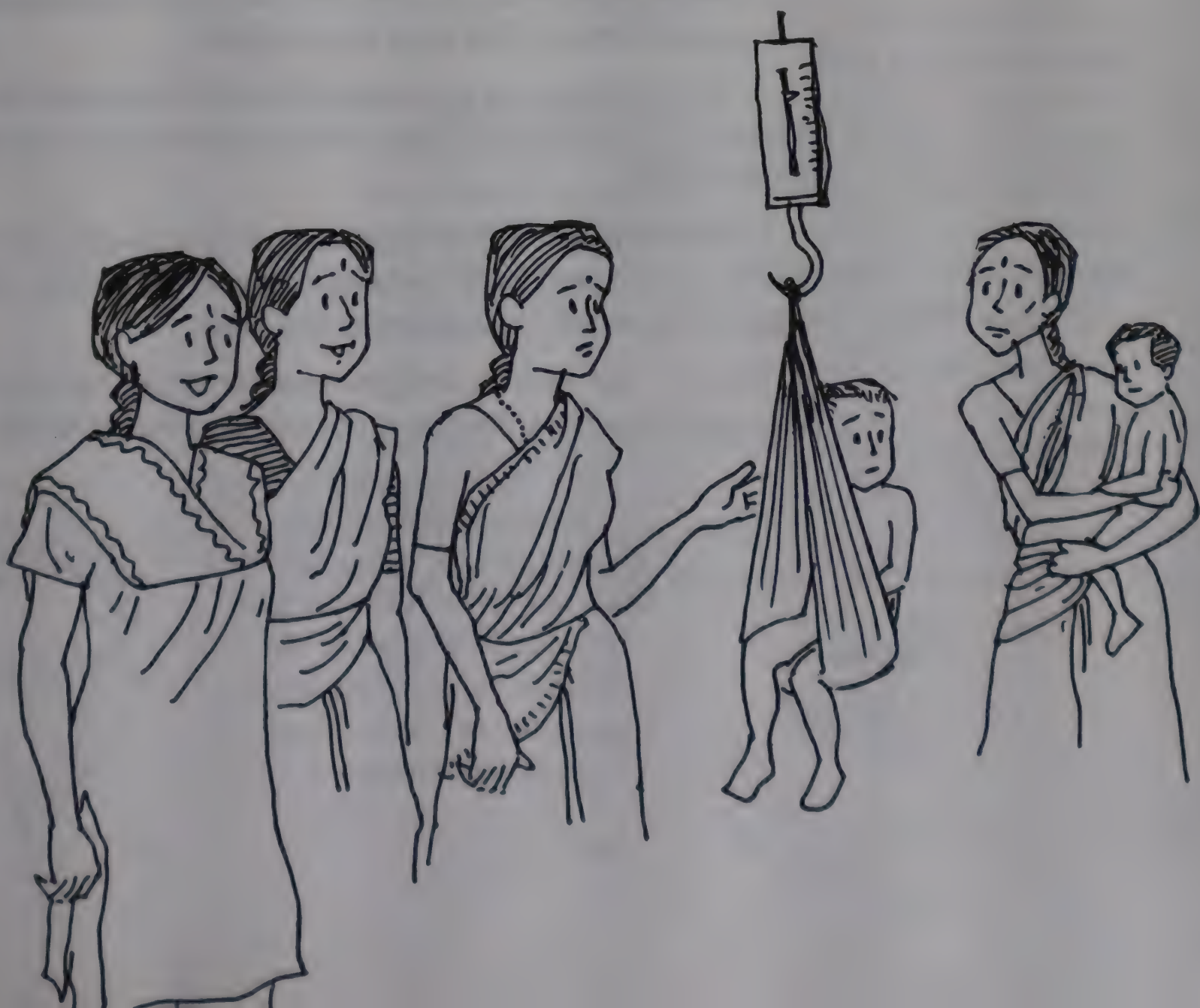
i. A trained health worker or health volunteer in every village- for providing health education and support to families at risk. Many of the factors underlying child malnutrition outlined in section I can be addressed by this step:- This measure alone has been shown to reduce child malnutrition by over 30%!!

ii. An effective child health programme with referral in the primary health centres:

iii. An effective day care programme for pre school children in every village(includes food supplement):

These are other than the general measures outlined earlier in the book like

- ♦ better public distribution system for food grains
- ♦ better poverty alleviation programmes



Local Action: Addressing child malnutri- tion-The BGVS - TNSF 'Arogya Iyakkam' programme

1. Health volunteers in the community trained to identify children at risk
2. Then health volunteers talk with family and analyse and understand the causes of malnutrition in that specific child-
 - * What role is played by feeding practices - how can they be optimised?
 - * What role is played by disease factors -how can they be minimised - how can these common diseases which are life threatening in themselves be prevented for this child.
 - * What role if played by family circumstances?
 - * What have been family's attempts to cope? How can they be strengthened and where necessary redirected.
3. Then health volunteers repeatedly visit and support family -
 - * by making them aware of the malnourished state - so easily missed in a young child, even by the medical profession;
 - * by making the necessary corrections in feeding and child rearing practices,
 - * by strengthening the existing practices and giving them confidence to cope-
 - * by helping them access the state schemes for child health- immunisation, iron and vitamin supplements, food supplements, child care services etc.
4. The dialogue at the family level is reinforced by group meetings, by cultural art forms and by information inputs given in the media.
5. Health committees, local women's movements initiated in this context and (with limitations) panchayats too, help and support the health volunteers in this task.

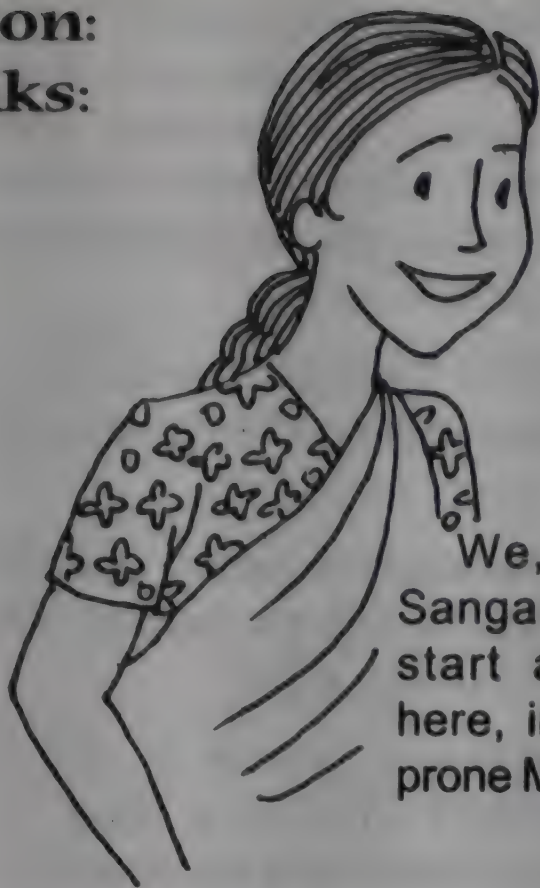
This is not only a programme on child malnutrition -it becomes a comprehensive programme on child health.

ONLY

if child malnutrition is addressed will the under 5 mortality rate fall further!!

And this is a programme that can become part of a process by which the family with malnutrition becomes part of the struggle for ensuring food security at the local and at the national level.

Local Action: Grain Banks:



This is another possibility for action. at the local community level. The work of the Deccan Development Agency in developing grain banks in Andhra has shown this approach is possible

We, the Mahila Sangam decided to start a PDS shop here, in the drought prone Medak dt.

We encouraged farmers to plant coarse grains (millets,) Because cheap rice was available in PDS and coarse grains had no market, farmers were leaving their lands fallow.

Next year we expanded the number of farmers. Some subsidy was needed but it is less than for other schemes.

We promised to buy all their produce at Rs 2 a kilo. Their market was assured. We helped them with credit and seeds which they paid back as grains.

When the drought came every summer we sold these grains at Rs. 3/kilo. Food security was now assured.

There is a necessity to initiate such community organised grain banks and seed banks across the entire country but especially in drought prone areas. There are many problems to overcome but potentially this is very much possible to achieve.

Regional (State-level) and National Action: Implementing the Supreme Court Order on the nine government schemes

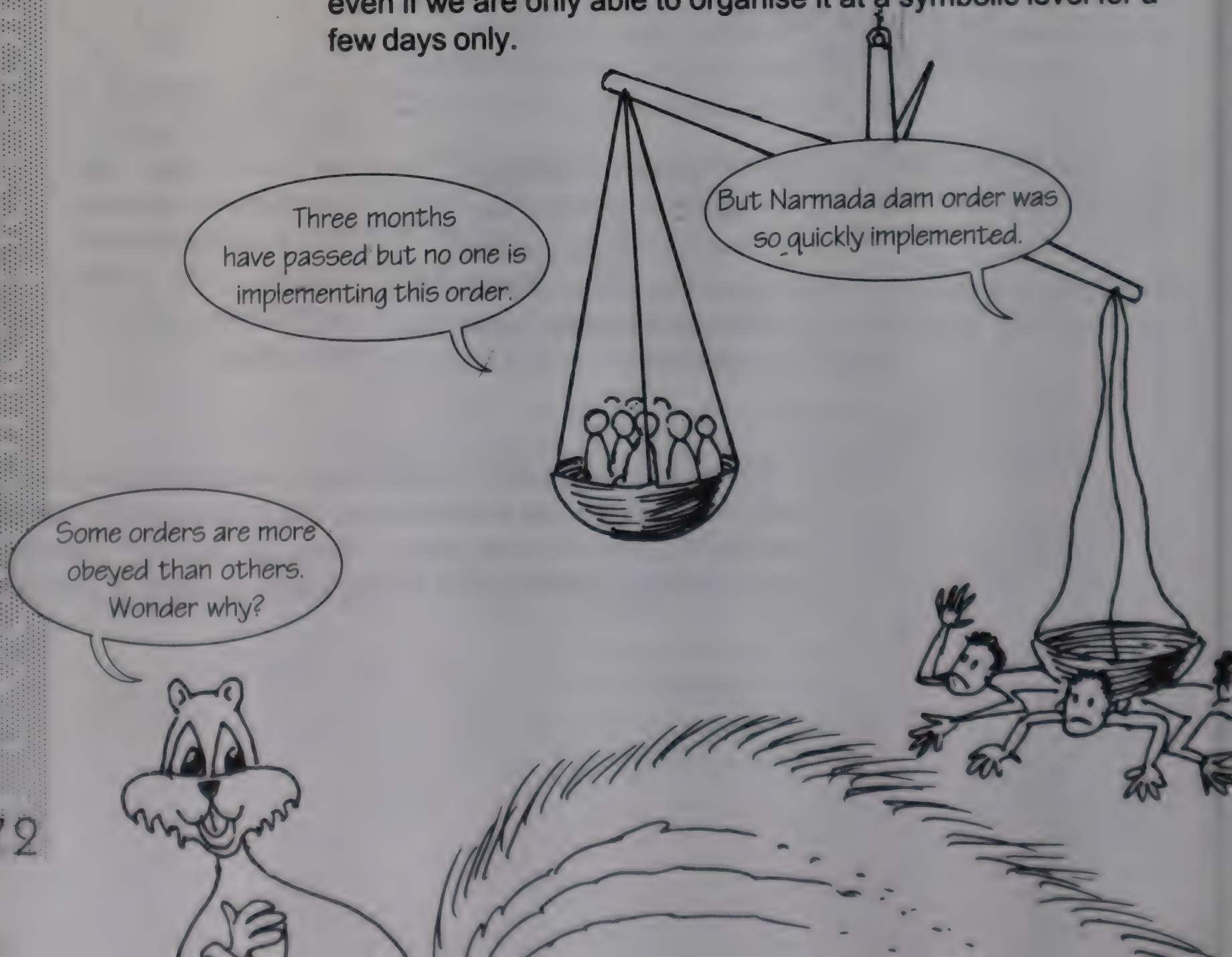
The Supreme Court had given upto three months for its order to be implemented. But little has been done. There is need for peoples actions to reinforce the order. Most of the action needed is to be taken by state governments and unless there is statewide peoples action one can expect little change merely by winning a court case.

- ♦ Raise questions in the legislative assemblies about non-implementation of Supreme Court order and the fate of the nine schemes.

- ♦ Widely disseminate the order and bring out public awareness on these schemes as peoples rights, affirmed by the highest court- and not as a dole

- ♦ Bring public pressure to bear on the rotting grains in government godowns and how they could be used constructively through these nine schemes.

- ♦ Arouse a sense of shame and responsibility for implementing these schemes through peoples action -like a public supported noon meal or a community run child care programme even if we are only able to organise it at a symbolic level for a few days only.



Regional & National Action: People's interventions for Improving livelihoods

The important goals for which peoples campaigns are needed are:

- ♦ Enforced, periodically revised minimum wages
- ♦ Creation of community infrastructure assets (like local watersheds) which in the present context they can be created through food for work programmes.
- ♦ Mechanisms of value addition at the local level - Building networked local enterprises that provide employment.
- ♦ Intervention to improve the functioning of panchayats.
 - a) Building their capabilities to plan and implement programmes.
 - b) More funds and power for panchayats.
 - c) More democratization and transparency of panchayat functioning.

In the long-term the above measures to succeed will require.

- a) a just redistribution of wealth.
- b) equitable access to natural resources.
- c) an end to discrimination based on caste or gender.



National Action & Global Action: Resisting globalisation

But while we promote peoples action at the local level, and press for policy changes at the national level we also need to contest the changes being forced on us at the international level- we need to contest the so- called globalisation's pressures. How?



The "globalisation" pressures

The alternatives needed

Pressures against production for subsistence in poor farmer and tribal sections.

Pressures against state action to distribute grain especially to the poor,

Pressures against food procurement policy to support food production.

Pressures against self reliance in agricultural input production - fertilisers and pesticides.

Pressures to choose technologies of dependence. Note that one hand hazardous technologies are dumped on us by MNCs , on the other hand restrictions are placed on many of our exports based on safety grounds, by writing the rules (in Codex Alimentarius) to their favour.

Safeguard local production of food grains- build local grain banks, safeguard local technologies too.

Insist on universal public distribution system.

Continue food procurement system.

Encourage indigenous and even small sector production of agricultural inputs especially in organic eco friendly alternatives.

Care against hazardous technologies, especially those that threaten bio diversity. The Codex Alimentarius maybe used for protection based on safety grounds- provided we ensure that it rules are fair and made in a transparent democratic manner.

Pressures that compromise our biodiversity.

Pressures to set international trade regime where we are forced to import food grains and lose our self sufficiency in food production.

Conserve indigenous biodiversity -in situ and in research laboratories, build farmer' controlled seedbanks, ensure patented technologies do not gain ascendancy

Call for positive trade discrimination regime which favours third world agriculture - demand and negotiate for a livelihood box where all trade which threatens livelihoods of poor can be protected. Livelihood opportunities esp. in agriculture should be protected by the Livelihood Security Box.

Globalisation, as led by the World Bank and World Trade Organization is a strategy by the large corporations of the West to find expanded avenues for investment and profits. To this end they call for the unrestricted right of transnational corporations to invest and profit in third world countries - claiming that eventually it will help the poor of the third world also. Yet no where in the world have the poor seen anything but more misery and starvation from such globalisation.

The pressures of "globalisation" are pressures on the food security and well-being of all countries-especially all countries of the developing world.

The alternatives needed are also needed by all the people of the world.

We therefore need to forge an alliance with working people & their organisations all over the world if we have to put an effective resistance to these policies.

Global Action:

World hunger and malnutrition is a direct consequence of the economic and social policies followed world-wide.

The ideology behind the current inequitable globalisation insists that there is no alternative to this present model of growth. It therefore fails to address the issue of hunger except as some 'safety net' measures to prevent peoples anger from leading to social unrest. But this is not true. 'Another world is possible'

Reorganising Food

The nature of organisation of food production must change world wide. We need to:

- ♦ Shift from a commodity centred /market driven farming system to a farming system approach built on integrated natural resource management to produce more from every unit of land , water and other inputs on a sustainable basis.
- ♦ Stress environmentally sustainable technologies, blending traditional wisdom and practices with the best of modern science
- ♦ Build on cooperative farming with stress on farmer friendly agri-clinics(to provide services such as soil health care, water conservation and integrated nutrient management, crop protection and to disseminate principles of designing farming systems for optimising production)
- ♦ Build post harvest technologies that ensure as much local value addition as possible through enterprise and small industry networks.
- ♦ Widen the narrow food security basket to include millets, cereals, grains, legumes, tubercrops, and vegetables that could be an effective strategy to combat hunger. Increase economic stake in cultivation of millets- nutritional cereals.
- ♦ Safeguard our Plant genetic resources and traditional knowledge on this.
- ♦ Increase the control of democratic organisations of farmers and other sections of the public over the directions of agricultural research and the process of technology transfer.
- ♦ Carry out land reforms to ensure that those who cultivate the land, own it.

ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

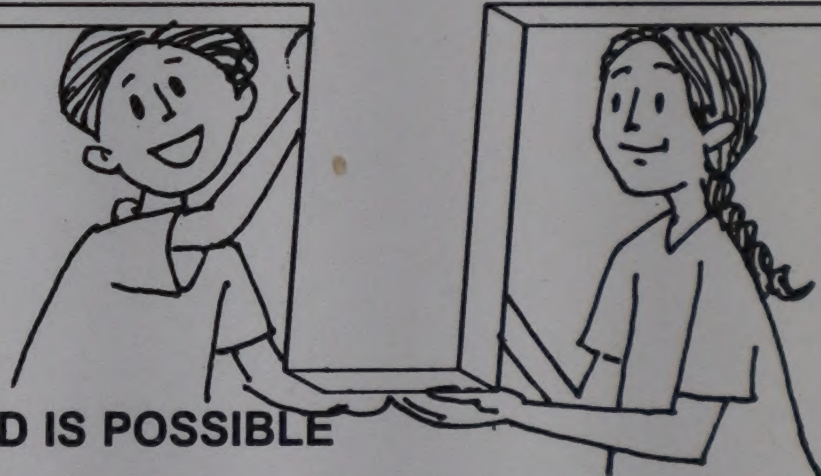
The current globalisation policies have inequity, competition, exploitation of nature, discrimination and unequal power and property relations as their basis.

We need a fair society and a just society, which has four basic values:

- ♦ Provisioning of basic necessities of life to all
- ♦ Equity,
- ♦ Sustainability,
- ♦ Democracy

**In such
a society**

- ♦ No one shall go hungry
- ♦ All children shall be educated and there shall be opportunities for life long learning.
 - ♦ There shall be universal good quality pre school child care services
 - ♦ There shall be adequate healthcare services accessible to all
 - ♦ All adults shall have gainful employment and security



SUCH A WORLD IS POSSIBLE

And the fight for the right to such a world starts with the fight for the right to food — the most basic of all basic necessities.

And the fight
for the right to food should start
simultaneously at the national level for
policy change and at the local level to
provide whatever relief
we can-here and now!



